

**The Use of Still and Multimedia Images in Teaching or Preaching  
to Enhance the Youth Pastor's Ability to Persuade and  
Communicate with Youth**

**A THESIS**

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

**BY**

**WILLIAM ANTON ACKERMAN**

**JANUARY 2007**

# CONTENTS

	Page
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vii
TABLES.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ix
ABSTRACT.....	x
CHAPTER 1. THE PROBLEM.....	1
Purpose of this Thesis.....	1
Expected Outcomes of this Experiment.....	3
The Current Situation Regarding Visual Image Usage in Youth Ministry.....	5
The Cultural Climate.....	5
The Use of Images in American Youth Ministry: Still Images.....	8
The Use of Images in American Youth Ministry: Multimedia.....	9
CHAPTER 2. THE SETTING.....	19
Visual Media's Effects Upon Cognition, Learning and Persuasion.....	19
Visual Cognition.....	20
Implications of Brain Activity During Visual Stimulation.....	21
Alternative Avenues of Communication.....	26
Vision, Emotion, and Cognition.....	30
The Church's Historical Usage of Visual Images in Worship and Teaching.....	44
Image Usage in the Old Testament.....	44
The Early Church.....	47

## CHAPTER 2. THE SETTING (con't.)

Post-Constantine.....	50
The Eastern Church.....	53
The Western Church in the Middle Ages.....	59
From the Reformation to the Twentieth Century.....	64

## CHAPTER 3. THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK..... 80

The Contextualization of the Gospel and Christian Doctrines.....	81
The Problem.....	81
The Low Change in Method Response.....	86
The High Change in Method Response.....	92
Conclusions.....	106
The Proscriptions of the Second Commandment.....	112
The Primacy of the Word.....	123
The Argument for the Primacy of the Word.....	123
The Argument Against the Primacy of the Word.....	127
The Christian Response to New Technologies.....	132
Conclusion.....	139

## CHAPTER 4. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE..... 140

The Historical Usage of Images by the Church.....	140
Theological Issues.....	148
The Use of Projected Images and Multimedia in the Church.....	158
The Effect of Visual Communication upon Cognition.....	163
Emotion and Cognition.....	163

CHAPTER 4. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE (con't.)	
Visual Media and Cognition.....	168
Visual Thinking and Education.....	177
CHAPTER 5. PROJECT DESIGN.....	181
The Design and Implementation of the Experiment .....	181
The Testing Instrument.....	185
Expected Outcomes of this Experiment.....	189
CHAPTER 6. OUTCOMES.....	191
Experimental Data.....	191
The Meaning of Statistical Interpretation.....	196
Statistical Interpretation of the Data.....	201
External Factors Potentially Affecting the Experiment.....	212
Conclusions and Future Studies.....	216
CHAPTER 7. IMPLICATIONS.....	224
Potential Benefits.....	224
Critical Cautions.....	227
The Proper Use of Visual Images.....	230
Conclusion.....	237
APPENDIX 1. EXPERIMENT'S RESULTS.....	238
APPENDIX 2. STATISTICAL RESULTS.....	242
APPENDIX 3. STUDENTS' ANSWERS to P10 and P22.....	245
APPENDIX 4. COPYRIGHT ISSUES.....	249
APPENDIX 5. TESTING INSTRUMENT.....	258

APPENDIX 6. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS.....	262
APPENDIX 7. SURVEY OF VIDEO/MULTIMEDIA USAGE IN YOUTH MINISTRY: Compiled Data From All Respondents .....	263
APPENDIX 8. SURVEY OF VIDEO/MULTIMEDIA USAGE IN YOUTH MINISTRY: Survey Results Broken Down By Size of Budget.....	267
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	271
VITA.....	279

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. The Emotion-Reason Continuum.....	43
2. Potential Responses to Changing Culture.....	85
3. The Normal Curve.....	197
4. Two Normal Curves with Different Means.....	198

## TABLES

Table	Page
1. Percentage of Youth Pastors Using Video in Specific Ministry Contexts.....	10
2. Frequency of Video/Multimedia Use in Ministry Contexts.....	11
3. Percentages Of Youth Pastors Using Specific Types of Video/Multimedia.....	12
4. Percentage of Youth Pastors Using Video/Multimedia for Specific Purposes.....	14
5. Percentages of Youth Pastors Using Video/Multimedia for Specific Philosophical Reasons in Youth Ministry.....	16
6. Mean Results for the Post-Test.....	192
7. Mean Differences Between Pre-Test & Post-Test, $P_{11-15}$ to $Q_{6-10}$ .....	195
8. Summary of Statistically Significant Results.....	217

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Dr. Gary Parrett for his thoughtful critique and assistance with this project and for creating such a fascinating and provocative course of study regarding ministering to postmodern generations. Thanks also to Dr. Bryan Auday for his invaluable assistance in completing the statistical analysis required by this project, and to Mr. Brian Inman for his technical assistance in creating the visual presentations used in this experiment. I would like to especially thank my wife, Kim, for her patience, support, and encouragement during the years of study that this degree and project entailed. Lastly I want to thank my energetic, mischievous, and amazingly brilliant four-year-old son, Alex, whose love and support delayed the completion of this project by countless months but whose company has been more valuable and more fun than any other occupation could ever be.



## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis presents the quantitative results of an experiment studying the effectiveness of incorporating visual images into preaching and teaching in a youth ministry context. The variables measured were: recall, communication, attention, stimulation of thought and emotion, persuasion, and enjoyment. Groups of students saw either a multimedia presentation or a slide presentation and were compared to a control group, which saw no visual elements.

The Multimedia Group outperformed the Control Group while the Slide Group performed oppositely. The work includes an historical overview of image use and theological reflection regarding the use of image and new technology by the church.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE PROBLEM

### *Purpose of this Thesis*

This thesis project attempts to quantitatively establish the manner and extent to which using still or multimedia<sup>1</sup> images in preaching or teaching in a youth ministry context can enhance the youth pastor's ability to communicate with and persuade youth. Additionally, it seeks to quantify the stimulus that still or multimedia images can have upon both the emotions and rational thinking of youth compared to a traditional verbal message, as well as to compare the reaction youth have toward including either of these types of visual images in a presentation.

This project presents the results of a non-randomized (more aptly a semi-randomized) two by three mixed design experiment, comparing and analyzing the responses to a survey instrument given to three comparable sets of middle school students. One set was presented with only a verbal lesson, the second set heard the same verbal lesson accompanied by still images, and the third set heard the lesson accompanied by a multimedia presentation.

The intention is to present information that will be applicable for helping youth pastors across the United States improve their ability to communicate.

Preachers have always had an array of rhetorical devices from which to choose

---

<sup>1</sup> Media is plural for medium, which is intended here to refer to modes or means of communication. Multimedia in this paper implies the possible combined and simultaneous usage of sound, voice, music, video, light, graphics, or pictures in a single presentation. Also, in this paper, the terms "audiovisual" and "motion media" may be used as synonyms for "multimedia."

to help them communicate their message to their audience, but advancing computer and visual technologies provide today's preachers with a choice of visual options that they may use to complement or supplement their message. The use of these visual technologies, however, will consume some of the ministry's resources. It costs money to buy the equipment and software that is needed to produce visual images, requires time and possibly money for training in order to master the technologies, and requires time for production every occasion a new visual presentation is to be used. Obviously the wise youth pastor would like to see a positive return in the form of improved communication for such an investment of resources. This study looks at two of the possible ways that visual technology could be employed to supplement a spoken message and seeks to establish a benchmark of effect. It is hoped that this data will help youth pastors to determine if the benefit gained by the use of these new technologies justifies the investment required. If no value is determined, or if it is found that including visual elements has a deleterious effect on communication and persuasion, then clearly the use of these elements has not been justified. It must be noted that the data gained will be accurate only for the particular visual elements used. A lesson that incorporates better visual images, or better incorporates the same visual images may possibly have a more positive affect upon the audience. The reverse might be true of a presentation of lower quality. This study will, however, produce a quantitative result that will, it is hoped, be useful for extrapolating the possible effects that a youth pastor might expect from incorporating visual technologies into his ministry.

### ***Expected Outcomes of this Experiment***

In this study it was expected that there would be a statistically significant difference in the responses and scores recorded on the testing instrument between the three sets of students studied. Further, it was expected that the set that viewed the multimedia presentation accompanying the verbal lesson would represent one extreme of the experiment, that the set that heard only the verbal lesson would represent the other extreme, and that the set that viewed the still pictures would score in the middle. These expectations were based upon published data detailing the effect of visual images on memory. This research suggested that groups that are exposed to information presented visually score higher on questions regarding recall than groups that have the same information presented verbally.<sup>2</sup> Additional research data also suggested that exposing people to an emotionally stimulating experience increases their memory of the event. Therefore the emotionally charged multimedia presentation was expected to outscore the presentation containing still images, which although containing similar visual imagery, lacked the emotional impact of the multimedia presentation.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, since the multimedia presentation repeated the verbal lesson's points using several symbol systems (modes of communication), it was expected to better communicate the lesson than either still images plus the

---

<sup>2</sup> Frank P. Bazeli and Peter T. Bazeli, "Instructional Implications of Visual and Verbal Short-Term memory Capacity Differences Among Children," in *Visual Communication: Bridging Across Cultures. Selected Readings from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association Held in Washington, D.C., October 1991*, ed. Judy Clark Baca et al. (Blacksburg, VA, 1992), 40.

<sup>3</sup> Annie Lang and Marian Friestad, "Emotional, Hemispheric Specialization, and Visual and Verbal Memory for Television Messages," *Communication Research* 20, no. 5 (1993): 649.

verbal presentation, or the verbal presentation alone.<sup>4</sup> Therefore the testing of the comprehension of the lesson was expected to show the set of students exposed to the multimedia presentation scoring highest, followed by the set that saw the still images accompanying the lesson, followed lastly by the group that heard only the lesson.

It was also expected that students attending a seminar at a conference would not be investing 100% of their mental energy, and the scoring regarding the amount of invested mental effort (A.I.M.E.) should reflect this for all groups. This would imply that the presentation that was most interesting and enjoyable would command the most attention from the students. It was expected that the multimedia presentation would score highest in interest, enjoyment, and capturing attention, and the verbal presentation the lowest. This also implied that since the students' critical faculties would not be totally focused on the lesson, their emotions would potentially have more affect upon their thinking.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the emotionally provocative multimedia presentation was expected to prove more persuasive and inspiring to the students who saw it, and this would be reflected in their determination to apply the lesson to their daily lives, while the responses from the group that saw no visual images would demonstrate the lowest level of persuasion and inspiration.

---

<sup>4</sup> Robert B. Kozma, "The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues," in "Current Research," column ed. Delia Neuman, *School Library Media Quarterly* 22 (1994): 235.

<sup>5</sup> Ross Buck et al., "Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Affect, Reason, and Involvement in Persuasion: The ARI Model and the CASC Scale," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22 (1995), 441.

## ***The Current Situation Regarding Visual Image Usage in Youth Ministry***

This section will examine the cultural environment in which youth are currently living in regard to their exposure to and familiarity with multimedia visual images. It will also explore the penetration that still image and multimedia image usage has achieved in American youth ministry and the reasons for it.

### *The Cultural Climate*

The cultural context in which local churches now conduct youth ministry is an audiovisual youth culture. Beginning in the 1950's there has been an accelerating increase in youth's exposure to this media. Whereas in 1950 there were fewer than one hundred thousand television sets in the United States, a year later there were a million, and by 1959 over 88% of homes possessed a television set.<sup>6</sup> Today the audiovisual presence in kids' lives is even more pronounced. Television has expanded from the three major networks into scores of cable channels. The advent of VCR and DVD technology supplies a choice of thousands of movies at every video rental store. Computer technology provides kids with easy access to interactive video games and internet connection, and camcorders combined with video editing software enable them to make their own movies.

Today's youth have literally grown up in an environment that is awash in visual images and stimulations. Delp and Lusz summarize the situation:

If we grew up in the 1950's or later, we were nursed on the networks, cradled by cable, tutored with television, and captivated by

---

<sup>6</sup> Susan B. Neuman, *Literacy in the Television Age: The Myth of the TV Effect*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995), 1.

camcorders. We have been increasingly and more deeply trained to pay attention to what comes into our world through images, instead of by the printed or spoken word. We can deny it, decry it, or despise it, but this A/V reality will only accelerate in the coming years.<sup>7</sup>

The language of audiovisual communication differs greatly from that of its predecessor, print media. Regarding this difference Neil Postman builds upon Marshall McLuhan's idea that "the medium is the message" in arguing that although ideas dominate in the world of print, it is visual imagery that rules in the age of television. Postman says that, "television gives us conversation in images, not words." Postman says that this tectonic shift from the age of print to the age of the electronic media implies a shift in the ideas that are conveyed by the dominant media, a shift away from propositional argument and toward arguments based upon image.<sup>8</sup> Images are concrete and must be recognized while words have the capacity for abstraction and must be understood.<sup>9</sup>

Having been raised in an audiovisual saturated environment, youth are well accustomed to understanding this type of communication. Regarding this audiovisual language, Len Wilson writes:

Youth and children speak this language innately. They've been raised from birth with its presence surrounding them, from Disney as the baby-sitter to CD-ROM interactive "edutainment" games, to teen chat rooms, to standard broadcast television. They are completely media literate, understanding both how to send messages and how to receive them.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Jay Delp and Joel Lusz, *Just Shoot Me: A Practical Guide for Using Your Video Camera in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> Lance Strate, "Post(modern)man, or Neil Postman as a Postmodernist," *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 51 (1994), 161; Gavriel Salomon, *Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning* (Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1979), 36.

<sup>10</sup> Len Wilson, *The Wired Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1999), 28-29.

So thoroughly has the audiovisual language infiltrated the everyday lives of teenagers that they are sometimes required to produce multimedia presentations for school. For example, Indiana's 2000 English and Language Arts Academic Standards for twelfth graders require:

At Grade 12, students continue to combine the rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description to produce reflective compositions, historical investigation reports, and job applications and resume; and to deliver *multimedia presentations* [italics added].<sup>11</sup>

The expectation that graduating high school students will be capable of expressing themselves through multimedia presentations has astonishing implications. Firstly it implies that these teens will have a greater exposure and comfort with using visual images to communicate than will most people of their parents' generation. Secondly it means that their expectation for communication in many contexts will in some way involve multimedia. Thirdly it means that these young people are a potential resource for the church to employ to help it catch up to the rapidly developing world of video technology. It is therefore reasonable to anticipate that youth ministers (who are primarily young adults themselves) are using this new technology in novel ways and in unexpected contexts. One might in fact expect to discover visual images being used in every context in which communication is taking place. Likewise it might be reasonable to expect to find youth ministers employing the technological skills of teens to produce video material for their programs, material that might be beyond their own abilities to produce.

---

<sup>11</sup> In Abstract to *Indiana's Academic Standards: 12<sup>th</sup> Grade English/Language Arts*, Indiana State Department of Education (Indianapolis, IN, 2000).



### *The Use of Images in American Youth Ministry: Still Images*

A national survey of youth pastors conducted in 2004 discovered that these expectations are, in fact, reality.<sup>12</sup> The results of this survey are presented in differing formats in Appendix 7 and Appendix 8. Looking at the second section of the survey, which covered still images and texts, shows that an amazingly high number of youth ministries are in fact using image-projecting technology:

- 87% project lyrics for worship
- 70% project Bible texts
- 72% employ PowerPoint type slide presentations for teaching
- 74% project still photos

The data further reveals that youth pastors are, on average, investing 1.97 hours per week into preparing their PowerPoint (or similar type computer program) presentations. If those who do not use this type of presentation at all, and hence report zero hours per week in preparation, are factored out, the average result increases to 2.42 hours per week. This is significant in that it implies that a high number of youth pastors (72%) have integrated computer technology and video technology into their ministries.

In evaluating the use of PowerPoint type slide presentations, 49% of youth pastors overall said that it improved the impact and effectiveness of their teaching a great deal, and an additional 25% said that it improved it somewhat. Combining these numbers shows that 74% of youth pastors feel that PowerPoint type slide presentations make a positive impact on their teaching. Only 4% think that PowerPoint type slide presentations have only a marginal impact, 1%

---

<sup>12</sup> William A. Ackerman, "The Use of Video Images and Video Technology in American Youth Ministry," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry Program, Ministering to Postmodern Generations, Project #2, 2004, 32-65.

think it has no positive impact, and 15% said that the question is not applicable to them. If the percentages are recalculated by eliminating the “Not Applicable” answers from the total, the percentage of youth pastors who said that PowerPoint type slide presentations improved the impact and effectiveness of their teaching a great deal increases to 61%, and the percentage who have a positive view of its impact on their program increases to 92%.

### *The Use of Images in American Youth Ministry: Multimedia*

The survey demonstrated in the first question of the third section, labeled “Video/Multimedia”, that nearly 90% of youth pastors are using video/multimedia in the context of their ministries. Table 1 shows the percentages of youth pastors (those who are presently using video in their ministries) who are using video in specific ministry contexts. It will be noted that there is substantial usage in all of the ministry contexts. The highest percentage usage occurs in the contexts that involve the largest numbers of students. The reasons for this are uncertain, but one possible reason could be that in a small, intimate group setting an impersonal multimedia presentation is less appropriate or less effective. Another possible reason could be that the time required to prepare a multimedia presentation limits its use, for many youth pastors, to those contexts where the most number of students will benefit from it.

**TABLE 1**  
**Percentage of Youth Pastors Using Video in Specific Ministry Contexts**

<b>% of Youth Pastors</b>	<b>Specific Ministry Context</b>
93	Large Group Meetings
75	Worship
69	Retreats
69	Camps or Conferences
53	Sunday School
44	Bible Studies
31	Small groups
6	Other

Table 2 displays the frequency that video/multimedia is used in each of the above mentioned ministry contexts. It will be noted that video/multimedia is being used very frequently, and not just for special occasions. The frequencies of usage are remarkably consistent in the ministry contexts, once worship, retreats and camps are factored out. It appears that youth pastors are employing video/multimedia technology throughout their programs. The predominant device used to project the image has become the video projector, which is used by 93% of youth pastors who are using video/multimedia. The old standard, the television, is still used, however, by 56% of youth pastors. Presumably the television is used by those without access to a video projector, or in smaller contexts that do not require a big screen image. The predominant device used to

create the image is still the VCR, used by 93% of those youth pastors who are using anything. The DVD is a close second, despite being a much newer technology, being used by 91%. The computer is employed by 81% of youth pastors, and 47% use a video camera.

**TABLE 2**  
**Frequency of Video/Multimedia Use in Ministry Contexts**

<b>Times Video used per</b>	<b>Ministry Contexts</b>
3.2 Times per Month	Large Group Meetings
3.6 Times per Month	Worship
2.6 Times per Year	Retreats
2.2 Times per Year	Camps and Conferences
2.4 Times per Month	Sunday School
2.6 Times per Month	Bible Studies
2.7 Times per Month	Small Groups

Table 3 displays the specific ways in which the video/multimedia image is produced for use in youth ministry contexts, and the percentage of the youth pastors (those who are using video/multimedia) who are using each specific way. Amazingly, 88% of youth pastors who are using video/multimedia are making and using their own footage. This is even a higher percentage than those who are using purchased teaching videos. Of course it is not surprising that the use of commercial movie clips for illustration purposes garnered the highest

percentage since this method of employing video for teaching has been available the longest amount of time and numerous books have been published that detail exactly how to do it.<sup>13</sup> What is surprising is that 43% of respondents who are using video/multimedia are modifying commercially available movies themselves. This requires proficiency at using video editing software on their computers, and image capturing hardware.

**TABLE 3**  
**Percentages Of Youth Pastors Using Specific Types of Video/Multimedia**

<b>% of Youth Pastors</b>	<b>Types of Video/Multimedia Images Produced</b>
94	Movie clips: scenes of commercial films used to illustrate a topic of point
88	Homemade video: video footage your ministry made
76	Purchased VCR or DVD with a teaching message
60	Music Videos
43	Combination: commercial film clips that you edited or modified
26	Live image: direct feed from camera to screen
9	Other

It will be noted that almost all youth pastors presently show clips from commercial movies, and nearly half modify them in some way. These practices definitely touch upon the legal boundaries of copyright law and may be illegal in some cases. If so, the youth pastor and the local church could be exposed to expensive and time-consuming litigation. Appendix 4 contains a discussion

---

<sup>13</sup> Brian Belknap, *Group's Blockbuster Movie Illustrations* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003); Terry Cartwright et al., *Movie Clips for Kids: Faith Building Video Devotions* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001).

regarding the extent and requirements of the copyright laws and offers some helpful guidance for staying inside the bounds of the law.

The specific purposes for which youth pastors are using video/multimedia (asked about in question #7 of the survey), are detailed in Table 4. It can be seen that the technology is being used widely for diverse purposes. Virtually all youth pastors who use multimedia use it as a teaching aid, with 78% using it to introduce a topic at the beginning of a lesson and 94% using it to illustrate or make a teaching point. It is also being highly used as a medium to relay information about scheduling and events. Video from past retreats and events has replaced the old youth group slide show, and is being used by 79% of youth pastors for this purpose. Interestingly, 68% feel that putting their kids on the screen is a purpose in itself. Perhaps they conclude that the visual impact of a student seeing himself or his friends on screen has a positive effect, possibly by increasing attendance, or by creating a sense of belonging to the group. Making an emotional or memorable impact with video images is a stated purpose for its use by 66% of youth pastors who are using video/multimedia. 60% are using video to actually teach the lesson, playing a “pre-made” (most likely a commercially available teaching video) video in place of a live speaker. Very significantly, slightly more than half of youth pastors are using video technology in their ministries not only for the affect it has on the audience that watches it, but also for the benefit of those that make it. They see it as an opportunity for their adult volunteers and for their kids to get involved in the ministry. In this way there is a double benefit to the technology use.

**TABLE 4**  
**Percentage of Youth Pastors Using Video/Multimedia for Specific Purposes**

<b>% of Youth Pastors</b>	<b>Purpose Video/Multimedia Is Employed</b>
94	Illustrate or make a teaching point
82	Advertise upcoming events
79	Celebrate past events (retreats, etc.).
78	Introduce a topic
72	Announcements
68	Put your kids on the screen so that they can see themselves and their friends
66	Make an emotional or memorable impact on the audience
60	Teach the lesson
51	Provide ministry opportunities for some of your kids and volunteers
31	Make the action on stage more visible to the audience
6	Other

The reported time invested in video preparation varied quite widely from one youth ministry to another. The average of all respondents was 6.97 hours per month. This set of data has an enormously high standard deviation of 9.3, reflecting the great disparity of the answers, which ranged from 0.0 hours per month to 50 hours per month. If the data sample is narrowed to exclude those youth pastors who do not use video/multimedia at all (i.e. all the 0.0's are removed from the data), then the average increases to 7.62 hours per month, but the standard deviation also increases to 9.47. The significance of these figures

is that while there is great consistency in the use of video/multimedia among youth pastors, the effort that they are putting into its use varies greatly.

When asked, in the ninth question, for what philosophical or practical reasons they employ video/multimedia in their ministries, youth pastors were more varied in their answers. Table 5 displays the percentages of youth pastors who use video/multimedia in their ministries for each of a number of specific reasons. As can be seen the vast majority (90%) believe that the visual image has the ability to create a powerful emotional impact and be persuasive, making it a useful tool for the youth pastor to employ as he tries to speak to his kids through the cacophonous din of a culture that is screaming contrary messages at them. No other reason for using video/multimedia achieved nearly this level of uniform concurrence. The nearest rival in agreement came in at 60% and was for the ability for video to establish connections with kids when they see themselves on the screen. Again, for a youth pastor struggling to draw busy and over-committed kids to his program, this is an attractive tool to use. In an entertainment saturated society, it is not surprising that 57% would feel it important to use a medium of communication that kids find entertaining in order to better hold their attention. In fact, almost half of the youth pastors who responded to this question believe that their kids receive a video message more readily than they do a traditional talk. Almost that many (40%) believe that the culture is so “video saturated” that their kids actually come into their ministry context expecting it to be employed there, as it is everywhere else in their lives. Half also believe in using this technology (as mentioned above) for the express



purpose of creating ministry opportunities for adult and student volunteers. In this context, 43% believe that giving kids the opportunity to make video gives them the opportunity to communicate their ideas and feelings through a creative medium that they otherwise would lack. Another 40% of youth pastors believe that using a commercially available teaching video can for some subjects provide a better learning opportunity for their kids than they would otherwise have.

**TABLE 5**  
**Percentages of Youth Pastors Using Video/Multimedia for**  
**Specific Philosophical Reasons in Youth Ministry**

<b>% of Youth Pastors</b>	<b>Philosophical or Practical Reason for Using Video/Multimedia in Ministry</b>
90	Video images can create a powerful emotional impact and be persuasive
60	Video taping your kids makes connections with them
57	Video is entertaining
49	Video production provides a useful ministry opportunity for kids and volunteers
49	Kids receive video messages more readily than they do traditional talks
43	Video production gives kids the power to communicate
40	Kids are immersed in a video saturated culture and expect it
40	Playing a purchased teaching video can provide a better lesson for the occasion
15	You sometimes are short on lesson preparation time
12	Other
9	Your group and/or venue necessitate it
1	Using video technology helps to impress your church

The tenth question inquired as to who it is that actually invests the time to prepare the video/multimedia program for presentation. Not surprisingly, the youth pastors led the field at 79%. What is surprising is that kids ranked next highest, making video/multimedia presentations in 57% of the responding youth ministries. This is just a slightly higher percentage than adult volunteers, who make them in 56% of the ministries. These figures show that in significant numbers youth pastors are allowing this part of the ministry to be shared. Other paid youth ministry staff, a luxury beyond the financial ability of many churches, make the video in 26% of the responding ministries.

The eleventh question asked the respondents to evaluate whether the use of video/multimedia elements improves the impact and effectiveness of their programs. Almost half, 47%, said that it did so a great deal, and another 44% said that it did somewhat. Overall then, an overwhelming majority of 91% has a favorable opinion of the effectiveness of using video/multimedia in their ministries.

In summary, visual images in the form of still slides and multimedia images are presently ubiquitous in American youth culture as well as in American youth ministry. They are being used in a virtually all youth ministry contexts for a variety of reasons, the most often stated reason being that video images can create a powerful emotional impact upon kids and be persuasive. Most youth pastors have incorporated computer and visual technologies into their ministries and many are including teens in the production of these images. Additionally, most of the youth pastors surveyed believe that using these visual elements is

having a positive impact upon their ministries. In the following chapters of this project this assumption that visual elements have a positive impact upon communication is empirically tested, the current research regarding the visual communication examined, and the church's historical use of image studied. This will enable the youth pastor and the church at large to make a more reasoned decision regarding how visual images can or should be incorporated into their ministries.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE SETTING**

In the first chapter it was revealed that a great majority of youth pastors frequently employ visual media in their ministries and that they have a very positive attitude regarding the effectiveness of these technologies. In this chapter two relevant areas will be discussed. First is the extent research regarding visual communication and cognition, which will shed light upon how visual images communicate and give some indication as to their potential benefit for youth ministry. The second is the use of visual images by the church throughout its history. Image usage did not appear with the advent of modern technology and youth pastors can learn valuable lessons by examining the church's former practices and experiences.

#### ***Visual Media's Effects Upon Cognition, Learning and Persuasion***

Modern research in the areas of psychology, neurobiology, education, and advertising has greatly contributed to understanding the potential that multimedia and visual images have in fostering cognition and learning in the minds of their viewers, as well as their power to move and persuade their audience. This information should be very helpful to the youth pastor who wishes to understand the nature and process of visual communication with an eye to better employing it in his ministry. The application of this material to ministry will be discussed in the last chapter of this work.

## *Visual Cognition*

Robert McKim in his book, *Experiences in Visual Thinking*, points out how many English words link vision with thought. Words such as *insight*, *foresight*, *hindsight*, *farsighted*, *viewpoint*, *visionary*, and *seer*, together with phrases such as, “focusing in”, “getting the big picture”, and “see what I mean?” demonstrate this inextricable connection.<sup>1</sup> Published in the early 1970’s, one of the purposes of McKim’s book was to challenge the established academic opinion that considered verbal and mathematical “symbolic thinking” to be superior to what he calls, “visual thinking.” He sites the personal experiences of a variety of scientists who made major breakthroughs in their respective fields as demonstrations that true creative thought stems from the interaction between “visual thinking” and “symbolic thinking.” McKim writes:

Those of you who identify high intellectual endeavor exclusively with verbal and mathematical symbols should consider the introspections of Tesla, Einstein, and Kekule with special care. Has something been overlooked in your education?...

The quality of our thinking, by the same token must also be related to the nature of the primary material available for secondary elaboration. As Maslow suggests, the individual who is capable only of “secondary creativity” has little access to primary processes. He stands on other people’s shoulders, thinking about the written thoughts of someone who, in turn, was writing about an idea that he had read—and so on. The verbal thinker, especially, tends to think in this second-hand way: he skillfully manipulates symbols but rarely makes full contact with his own primary resources. Visual thinking is a marvelous antidote for this sterile, one-sided kind of thinking. Or, more correctly, visual thinking with its symbolically left-handed, primary-process origins, is a vital *complement* to symbolically right-handed, secondary-process thinking-by-words-and-numbers.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert H. McKim, *Experiences in Visual Thinking* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1972), 1.

<sup>2</sup> McKim, 9 and 21.

One of the reasons McKim suggests for the creative benefit of “visual thinking” is the fact that the human brain is constantly striving to make sense of the data streaming to it from the eyes. While the experience of seeing may seem like a passive process, perception is actually “an active, pattern-seeking process.”<sup>3</sup>

Since McKim wrote his book in the early 1970’s, much research has been completed on the brain’s functioning, abilities, and structure, which has furthered scientific understanding of the possibilities visual images have in fostering cognition and learning. Much of this research has focused on television viewing which has been the dominant method of delivering multimedia experiences in America since the 1950’s.

### *Implications of Brain Activity During Visual Stimulation*

As stated, the viewer is not a passive sponge while observing visual images such as still slides or multimedia, but is an active participant in interacting cognitively with the content. It should not be surprising then to discover that the brain is measurably active during a multimedia experience (such as television viewing), and not lulled into an inactive state. The brain itself is an amazingly complex organ made up of approximately “100 billion specialized nerve cells (neurons), each capable of making 50,000 connections as meaning is detected.”<sup>4</sup>

Kruse writes:

---

<sup>3</sup> McKim, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Gary D. Kruse, “Cognitive Science and Its Implications for Education,” *NASSP Bulletin*, 82 (1998), 73.

Researchers describe the brain as an extremely dynamic organ. It appears that it is rarely at rest and constantly searches for meaning. Moreover, the organ grows as meaning is attached and new synaptic connections are laid down. Hemispheres of the cerebrum provide their owner with a number of different perspectives when interpreting information for meaning. Besides helping to decipher the world outside us, the brain also appears to have the ability to go off on its own to evoke new ideas.<sup>5</sup>

The implication of this is that even during a relaxing evening of television viewing the brain is actively making instant synaptic connections to produce meaning in what is being viewed based upon what it already knows, and potentially generates new ideas and thoughts spurred on by the information stream coming from the eyes and ears during a multimedia presentation. This brain activity is measurable via an electroencephalogram (EEG) invented in the early 1930's by Hans Berger. The EEG provides a continuous record of electrical activity ("brain waves") originating predominantly from nerve cells in the cortex of the brain and is recorded from electrodes placed directly on the surface of the scalp.<sup>6</sup> The EEG is often used in the medical field to detect brain damage and brain disorders such as epilepsy. It, along with the ERP (event-related potentials), has also been used to demonstrate correlations between ongoing brain activity and television viewing, particularly in the field of advertising research.<sup>7</sup> Fite explains:

Several different electrical frequencies or rhythms make up the EEG, two of which can be observed in an awake individual. The alpha rhythm (8-12 cycles/second) indicates a resting, inattentive mental state and appears mainly in the parietal and occipital regions. Alpha is suppressed when subjects are instructed to pay attention to a stimulus or when they are engaged in active mental activity. The beta rhythm (13-26 cycles/second) also has been used

---

<sup>5</sup> Kruse, 75.

<sup>6</sup> Katherine V. Fite, "Television and the Brain: A Review." Paper commissioned by Children's Television Workshop (New York, N.Y.: June 15, 1993), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Fite, 5.

as an index of arousal, attention and cognitive activity and predominates in the central and frontal cortical areas.<sup>8</sup>

Fite goes on to detail several studies that have been conducted to measure brain wave activity during television viewing. Except for the first study conducted in 1971, which was flawed in design and is dismissed as untrustworthy by modern researchers, these studies uniformly conclude that beta wave activity generally increases and alpha wave activity is suppressed during television viewing.<sup>9</sup> One of these studies is of special note. In 1980 Walker measured the brain waves of a group of undergraduate students under six conditions: viewing a daytime talk show on television; reading an essay concerning the biological framework of language; resting with eyes closed; eyes open looking at a blank television screen; imagining sitting quietly on a beach; and counting backwards. Both the highest levels of beta wave activity and the lowest levels of alpha wave activity were equally shared by two of the activities: reading and television viewing (the talk show, not the blank screen).<sup>10</sup> This demonstrates that the brains of these undergraduate students were as active while watching the audiovisual medium of television as they were reading an essay, disproving the criticisms that multimedia presentations are an inferior way of engaging the mind. As one might expect, further research has demonstrated that those television commercials that generate greater amounts of brain activity are the commercials that are recalled with the greatest accuracy.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Fite, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Fite, 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Fite, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Fite, 14.



If the brain were active during television viewing then this would lead one to suspect that this medium could be used effectively for educational purposes. The question then becomes, is it as effective a vehicle for learning as is a printed book, a lecture, or a sermon? Some theorists have proposed that "reading is necessarily the more engaging cognitive task, because characteristics of print media cause receivers to process information in more depth while characteristics of the television medium cause receivers to process information in superficial ways."<sup>12</sup> To test this hypothesis, Salomon exposed one group of sixth graders to a short television program while another similar group was given a text equivalent to read. Both groups were tested for "explicitly presented factual content and inferred or implicitly presented material.... The television group scored significantly lower on the comprehension measures than the print group."<sup>13</sup> This might suggest that print is a more efficacious vehicle for education, or there might also be another determining factor that influenced the test. Salomon had also administered an assessment of the amount of invested mental effort (A.I.M.E.) for each student studied. The television group reported lower A.I.M.E. scores than did the print group. As a whole, any student's comprehension score (especially that part which was inferential) was proportional to his A.I.M.E. score.<sup>14</sup> The less effort a student put into either reading or watching the less he comprehended. This might indicate that since the television

---

<sup>12</sup> Jeanne M. Meadowcroft and Beth Olson, "Television Viewing vs. Reading: Testing Information Processing Assumptions," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Washington, D.C.: August 9-12, 1995), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Bordeaux and Garrett Lange, "Children's Reported Investment of Mental Effort When Viewing Television," *Communication Research*, 18 (1991), 61.

<sup>14</sup> Bordeaux, 619.

group as a whole put less effort into concentrating than did the print group that is why they scored lower on the comprehension test. Salomon then tested two more groups of sixth graders, but this time instructed one television group to view the program for fun, while the other he instructed to view for learning. The two groups scored similarly on the factual recall questions, but the “for fun” group scored significantly lower on the questions about inferential content.<sup>15</sup> His conclusion was that children are predisposed to view television content as easy to understand, and hence do not engage in conscious, thoughtful processing of the content unless alerted to do so. In contrast they expect reading to be difficult and apportion their attention to the text accordingly.<sup>16</sup> As Meadowcroft summarizes:

In other words, the amount of mental effort allocated to a task is a function of perceived task difficulty. In the absence of other cues, preconceptions about the relative difficulty involved in processing information from print vs. television predisposes the receiver to allocate more mental effort to a printed vs. a televised message. However if cues are provided about the difficulty of an information processing task, children will allocate more mental effort to the complex vs. the simple task, regardless of the medium delivering the message.<sup>17</sup>

Meadowcroft conducted a separate study using sixty-eight undergraduate students. Half were shown a televised discussion of Chaos theory from the field of physics, and half were given an equivalent printed text, and both were tested for A.I.M.E. and for recognition and recall.<sup>18</sup> She states the results saying:

Readers did not allocate more mental effort to processing information, compared to television viewers; readers did not

---

<sup>15</sup> Bordeaux, 620.

<sup>16</sup> Bordeaux, 619.

<sup>17</sup> Meadowcroft, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Meadowcroft, 11.

elaborate information more than television viewers; readers did not remember central program content better than television viewers; television viewers did not enjoy content more than readers; television viewers did not perform better on recognition tasks than on recall tasks; and recall task performance was not superior in print vs. television conditions.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore it must be concluded that for adults as well as for children given a prompting to pay attention, multimedia is as viable a medium for education as is print. Additionally, most studies demonstrate that an audiovisual presentation results in greater recall than either an audio or a visual presentation does individually.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, visual short-term memory has been demonstrated to exceed auditory short-term memory.<sup>21</sup> In summary, these facts would imply that a presentation using audiovisual technology could be as efficacious as a printed text, and superior to a voice only lecture or sermon in terms of recall and/or comprehension.

### *Alternative Avenues of Communication*

In comparing motion media to print for educational purposes one must not overlook the seminal work of Gavriel Salomon. Salomon studied the symbol systems contained in various media and their relationship to cognition. A “symbol system” is a “set of symbolic expressions by which information is communicated according to specific rules and conventions: spoken language, printed text, pictures, numbers, graphs, and musical scores exemplify symbol

---

<sup>19</sup> Meadowcroft, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Kozma, 235.

<sup>21</sup> Bazeli, 40.

systems.”<sup>22</sup> For example, a typical textbook, aside from the pictures and graphics, utilizes “orthographic symbols that, in Western culture, are words composed of phonemic graphemes, horizontally arrayed from left to right.”<sup>23</sup> Of course this medium is inherently stable. That is to say that the reader can review what he has already gone over at any time. Multimedia potentially “utilizes many different symbol systems simultaneously—photography, gesture, speech, dance, music...”<sup>24</sup> The viewer must interpret all of these symbol systems moment by moment to understand the meaning conveyed. This medium is by nature unstable, as the viewer cannot go back over what has just transpired on the screen. Some symbol systems are incapable of communicating certain concepts. As Salomon points out it is as impossible for a seeing person to describe the color “red” to a blind man as it would be for a sculptor to express “suspicion”.<sup>25</sup> As Salomon states, “Some symbol systems emphasize mainly expression (ballet), some emphasize description (graphs) or depictions (pictures), and others are less restricted (language).”<sup>26</sup> Of course several different individual symbol systems may effectively be used communicate a given concept, but that is not to say that each will succeed with the same ease. If one gives a pencil and paper to a young child and asks him to represent an automobile collision he has witnessed, he is likely to use the pencil and paper to reenact the collision and not draw with them at all. This is because it is harder

---

<sup>22</sup> Kozma, 234

<sup>23</sup> Kozma, 234

<sup>24</sup> Gavriel Salomon, *Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning* (Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1979), 52.

<sup>25</sup> Salomon, 64.

<sup>26</sup> Salomon, 64.

for him to express movement through a drawing than it would be to use the pencil and paper as models to reconstruct the accident.<sup>27</sup> We might similarly point to the old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” In certain instances it is much easier to demonstrate a thought through a picture than it is to do so through language. On the other hand, it would be much easier to express “conditionality” verbally or in print (ex: if I find twenty dollars then I will take you to the movies) than it would be to express such a thought pictorially.<sup>28</sup> The obvious point to be gained is that the wise teacher matches the medium to the message. That is to say that he chooses the most effective, best-suited medium to convey a given message.<sup>29</sup> While this is an obvious truth for the simplistic examples sited so far, the situation is complicated by the fact that not all people receive and interpret a given concept expressed in a certain symbol system with equal ease. Salomon conducted a study using college students in which the students were asked to detail, in any manner they chose, the best way to travel from a certain building on campus to another. About half provided a written description while the other half gave a graphical depiction (map). Then the entire group of students was randomly split into two groups. One group was given a written description of a fictitious island while the other was given a map. Both groups were then tested for comprehension of the material presented. Time for completion and correctness of response were measured. Four subgroups appeared as a result of the testing. The two subgroups fastest (equally fast) to

---

<sup>27</sup> Salomon, 65.

<sup>28</sup> Salomon, 66.

<sup>29</sup> Leigh Chiarelott, “Cognition and the Media-ated Curriculum: Effects of Growing Up in an Electronic Environment,” *Educational Technology*, (May 1984), 20.

finish were the students who drew a map of the campus and received a map of the island, and the students who described the trip across campus and received a description of the island. The group of students who drew a map of the campus and received a description of the island, and the group who described the trip across campus and received a map of the island, finished equally slowly. All groups scored equally on the correctness of the responses.<sup>30</sup> From this experiment it is seen that the map communicated better than the written description to those students who were predisposed to think spatially. It took less mental effort, and hence less time, for these students to transfer the conceptual understanding in their minds into answers. Salomon states:

Relative to one's cognitive make-up (including cognitive growth and individual differences) and to the task to be performed, different symbol systems require different amounts of mental elaboration. Why then does one symbol system appear to be better than another for the communication of some content? It should be evident by now that *better* means mentally *easier*. One symbol system communicates better than another not because of any resemblance between the presented symbol and its referent, but because *one symbol system, when compared with another, can present information in better correspondence to—or congruity with—the mode of internal representation that an individual with a given cognitive make-up and task can best utilize*. The closer the correspondence, or the isomorphism, the easier it is for the learner.<sup>31</sup>

It is, therefore, incumbent upon the good teacher, preacher, or presenter, not only to choose the best symbol system, if a “best” exists, but also to use two or more if members of his audience would find that beneficial.

---

<sup>30</sup> Salomon, 73.

<sup>31</sup> Salomon, 72.

## *Vision, Emotion, and Cognition*

Recent research in the area of neurobiology has given rise to new understandings regarding how the brain operates and enables a person to think, learn and feel.<sup>32</sup> One of the more interesting and provocative accusations leveled against multimedia viewing concerns some of these new discoveries. The assertion is that exposure to large amounts of audiovisual programming, such as TV viewing, alters how people think, possibly even affecting the brain development of children. Fite describes such an accusation:

Television viewing may have hypnotic and possibly addicting effects and change the frequency of the electrical impulses in the brain which blocks active mental processing. Extensive television viewing deprives the left hemisphere of developmental time and space thereby disrupting the functions of language and reading. We are rearing a generation of “different brains” and “endangered minds” (Healy, 1990).<sup>33</sup>

Chiarelott repeats the same concern more concisely saying, “It is not beyond logical speculation to assume that while media content may affect behavior and attitudes, media forms may have even a more powerful effect on patterns of thinking.”<sup>34</sup> These concerns have at least partially grown out of Marshall McLuhan’s observations that the invention of the printing press changed the “sense ratio” of the culture. In preliterate culture all of the senses are involved in the process of communicating. The triumph of Guttenberg’s invention shifted the balance of sensory usage to being predominantly vision as the reader stared at the type on the page. In McLuhan’s view the invention of electronic

---

<sup>32</sup> Paul Gathercoal, “Brain research and Mediated Experience: An Interpretation of the Implications for Education,” *The Clearinghouse*, 63 (1990), 271.

<sup>33</sup> Fite, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Chiarelott, 19.

media restored the balance of the senses back to using both ears and eyes.<sup>35</sup> It seems ironic that such a restoration would be so great a cause of concern when for the vast majority of human history the majority of the world's population has been illiterate. However, an analysis of how the brain processes print versus television has fueled the furor. Reading requires the brain to receive the visual input of the letter or character, recognize it, couple it with the surrounding characters, recognize the word of which it is part, couple that word with the surrounding words to make sense of a sentence, and to integrate the meaning of that sentence into the preceding sentences and paragraphs. This is alleged to create in the brain a habit of linear processing.<sup>36</sup> It has also been demonstrated that processing print generates more activity in the left hemisphere of the cerebrum than in the right.<sup>37</sup> Audiovisual presentations, on the other hand, mix forms of sound, verbal, visual, and kinesthetic communication simultaneously.<sup>38</sup> This forces the brain to process the incoming stream in a different way than it handled print.

At this point a simplified and abridged description of the parts of the brain and their function will be helpful in facilitating the discussion in the next few paragraphs of this paper. The lowest part of the brain is the brain stem, which serves to alert the rest of the brain to incoming sensory information. On top of

---

<sup>35</sup> Ross Buck, "Emotional Education and Mass Media: A New View of the Global Village," In *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Process*, eds. Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Susan Pingree (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988), 45.

<sup>36</sup> Buck, "Emotional Education," 45.

<sup>37</sup> Arjun Chaudhuri and Ross Buck, "Media Differences in Rational and Emotional Responses to Advertising," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 39 (Winter 1995), 111.

<sup>38</sup> David W. Allan, "A Phenomenological Perspective on Motion Media: The Iconic Phenomena Communication Model," *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 19 (1992), 150.



the brain stem is the limbic system, which “provides the chemicals that influence focus, attention, and concentration.”<sup>39</sup> The biggest part of the brain is the cerebrum, which is divided into the left and right hemispheres, and each covered by the cortex which houses 2/3 of the brain’s neurons. Connecting the two cerebral hemispheres is the corpus callosum, which acts as a communication bridge between the two.<sup>40</sup> Fite explains:

The cerebral hemispheres work together in processing complex stimuli, but with some specialization. Verbal components are more likely to be processed in the left hemisphere and nonverbal components in the right.<sup>41</sup>

This bilateral specialization allows the brain to think both divergently and convergently, intuitively and logically.<sup>42</sup> It should be stated that this specialization is not complete, but simply refers to greater activity in one cerebral hemisphere than in the other. It also must be remembered that the hemispheres are in constant communication via the corpus callosum and cannot be said under normal conditions to be working completely independently.

Fite detailed the many studies that have been conducted to examine if television viewing is predominantly a “right brained” activity and summarizes her conclusions saying:

In summary, the weight of published evidence does not support the notion of a predominantly right-hemisphere mode of information processing during television viewing. Rather, it appears that both cortical hemispheres are involved in the complex visual, auditory

---

<sup>39</sup> Kruse, 74.

<sup>40</sup> Kruse, 74.

<sup>41</sup> Fite, 16.

<sup>42</sup> Kruse, 74.

and perceptual experience associated with television viewing, as is true for other cognitive and conscious activities.<sup>43</sup>

This result should not be surprising in that most all of life's daily routines involve feeding the brain a constant audiovisual stream. Aside from being two dimensional, multimedia presentations are not very different from real life in the way in which the brain processes them so that one ought not to expect a damaging effect from viewing this medium. Ironically, it is reading print that forces the brain to specialize in one area, but, of course, this also has never been shown to have a negative effect.

The fact that exposure to multimedia does not have a negative effect upon brain development does not imply, however, that viewing the video images on the screen does not affect cognition at all. Numbers of studies have demonstrated diverse and surprising ways in which the visual image affects what people think. For example, the wedge/triangle shape is frequently used in visual advertisements because it evokes in the viewer a sense of energy or dynamism.<sup>44</sup> Of course this is not a conscious or logical connection that the viewer makes, but it is one that occurs nonetheless. Similarly, "by controlling the viewer's positioning vis-à-vis the characters, objects, or events in an image (including the image sequences of film or television), the image's producer can elicit responses which have been conditioned by the viewer's experience of

---

<sup>43</sup> Fite, 18.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Messaris, "Analog, Not Digital: Roots of Visual Literacy and Visual Intelligence," in *Visual Literacy in the Digital Age. Selected Readings From the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association*, (Rochester, NY: October 13-17, 1993), 308.

equivalent interrelationships with real-life people, things and actions”.<sup>45</sup> For example, filming a character from a low camera angle creates the impression in the viewer’s mind that the character is imposing, filming from above diminishes him. Zooming in on a character states his importance while a character in a crowd filmed from a distance will be deemed unimportant. Even the editing process can affect the impression that is made upon the audience. Fast-paced editing with straight cuts creates the impression of masculinity in viewers (useful in advertising men’s products), while slower paced editing coupled with fades and dissolves implies femininity in the minds of viewers.<sup>46</sup>

Another surprising effect that television (or any visual images) can have upon cognition is in the field of emotions. As stated above the hemispheres of the cerebrum specialize in the types of information that they process. That is to say that one hemisphere of the cerebrum is more actively involved in processing a specific type of information than the other. Lang and Friestad explain:

It is a robust finding that the right hemisphere is better at visual-spatial processing whereas the left hemisphere is a superior verbal processor. Thus the right hemisphere should encode more visual images, because it is predisposed toward the processing of spatial material, and the left should encode more verbal material.<sup>47</sup>

The hemispheres of the cerebrum, however, also seem to specialize in the types of emotion that they process. Numbers of studies have demonstrated that negative emotions are predominantly processed in the right cortical hemisphere, particularly in the frontal lobe, while positive emotions are predominantly

---

<sup>45</sup> Messaris, 309.

<sup>46</sup> Messaris, 309-310.

<sup>47</sup> Annie Lang and Marian Friestad, “Emotion, Hemispheric Specialization, and Visual and Verbal Memory for Television Messages,” *Communication Research*, 20 (1993), 651.

processed in the left hemisphere.<sup>48</sup> These findings led Lang and Friestad to research the efficacy of using visual communication for negative messages and verbal communication for positive ones. They summarize the results of their work saying:

The primary hypothesis being tested here was that positive messages would result in greater verbal memory and negative messages would result in greater visual memory. Generally, this was found to be true. It may be that when designing an emotionally negative message (commercial, PSA, or program) important or critical information should be presented visually (i.e., showing audience members what to do or not to do). On the other hand, when creating an emotionally positive message, “telling” the audience may be the most efficient mode of communication for critical information. And, perhaps more realistically, when the emotional valence or tone of a message changes from positive to negative or vice versa, communicators should be aware that their audience may be shifting their processing resources between the visual and verbal elements within the message.<sup>49</sup>

The clear implication again is that the medium should be chosen to fit the message in order to facilitate optimum communication. At the very least it provides a scientific explanation as to why the sign negatively stating, “Please use other door” is more effective than its positively stated counterpart.

Having cursorily introduced the topic of visual media and the emotions, it would be meet to discuss this connection in more depth. As shall be demonstrated, multimedia has great potential to affect cognition via the emotions. Our English word “emotion” is derived from the Latin word *emovere*, which means, “to move out”.<sup>50</sup> Obviously we use the word to describe the feeling of

---

<sup>48</sup> Fite, 16.

<sup>49</sup> Lang, 666.

<sup>50</sup> Carrie Rood, “Critical Viewing and the Significance of the Emotional Response,” *Eyes on the Future: Converging Images, Ideas, and Instruction. Selected Readings From the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association*, (Chicago: October 18-22, 1995), 113.

“being moved”. A scientific description of emotion is much more complex, however. In the oft-quoted work *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, Antonio Damasio defines emotion as:

Emotion is the combination of a mental evaluative process, simple or complex, with dispositional responses to that process, mostly toward the body proper, resulting in an emotional body state, but also toward the brain itself (neurotransmitter nuclei in brain stem), resulting in additional mental changes.<sup>51</sup>

A greatly abridged and simplified explanation of Damasio’s point would be helpful. In his book Damasio explains that all incoming stimuli enter the brain and are processed by portions of the “lower brain” referred to as the limbic system. “Wired” into the brain at birth are certain recognition features (a bear, a smile, a frown, a scream, a growl, etc.) such that when the incoming stimulus matches one of these features an instant response by the limbic system is triggered. Chemicals are released and electric signals sent that alert the body and change its state. Simultaneously, the limbic system alerts the “upper” parts of the brain (cerebrum), which then analyzes the input and sends a response back to the limbic system. The cerebrum can reason that what appears to be threatening (or funny, or sad) actually is not, and then override the initial response, though it cannot prevent it from initially occurring.<sup>52</sup> This is a greatly simplified explanation but serves to capture the essence of what is actually occurring in the body and brain during an emotional response. Some recognition features create a stronger initial response by the limbic system than others, while others appeal for more of a cerebral response. The key feature to recognize is

---

<sup>51</sup> Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes’ Error* (New York: Gosset/Putnam, 1994), 139.

<sup>52</sup> Damasio, 132-142.

that the human emotional response is not directly under control of the parts of the brain that think linearly and rationally. For example, a person smiling for the camera appears noticeably different than when he smiles spontaneously at something humorous. That is because some of the muscles that control a spontaneous smile (orbicularis muscle) cannot be moved voluntarily and are unconsciously controlled through parts of the brain in the limbic system.<sup>53</sup> Similarly probably everyone has observed that infants when viewing “happy faces” will respond positively and when viewing frowning faces respond negatively despite the fact that they are too young to have learned a meaning for these facial expressions. Their emotional reaction is already “programmed” in.

The further implication of this line of study is that man’s capacity to reason and make decisions, contra Descartes, is inseparably bound to his emotions, feelings, and body. The Greek or Cartesian concept of the disembodied mind is in error, while the Hebrew understanding of man as body, soul, and spirit appears to match much more closely with the new discoveries of science.<sup>54</sup> All the parts of the brain, as well as the body which is biochemically connected to the brain, influence one another, and affect man’s capacity to reason. As Damasio states:

Human reason depends upon several brain systems, working in concert across many levels of neuronal organization, rather than a single brain center. Both “high-level” and “low-level” brain centers, from the prefrontal cortices to the hypothalamus and brain stem, cooperate in the making of reason. The lower levels of the neural edifice of reason are the same ones that regulate the processing of emotions and feelings, along with the body functions necessary for an organism’s survival. In turn, these lower levels maintain direct

---

<sup>53</sup> Damasio, 142.

<sup>54</sup> Damasio, 250.

and mutual relationships with virtually every bodily organ, thus placing the body directly within the chain of operations that generate the highest reaches of reasoning, decision making, and, by extension, social behavior and creativity. Emotion, feeling, and biological regulation all play a role in human reason. The lowly orders of our organism are in the loop of high reason.<sup>55</sup>

These facts hold tremendous implications and possibilities for using visual images to influence, persuade, or motivate people for action. Because an arresting visual image or sound has the power to create an instant emotional response while print or typical speech (such as a sermon) must first be processed through the cerebrum (its symbol system must be decoded and interpreted) before its message can have an effect, the former has more power to move the emotions of the audience. Aristotle recognized the fact that emotion has the power to affect a person's thinking and to persuade, and includes its appeal in his classic description of the three avenues for persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos.<sup>56</sup> Advertisers, politicians, and others have utilized Aristotle's ideas effectively ever since, especially since the invention of electronic media.

Researchers in the field of advertising often use the terms "analytic cognition" and "syncretic cognition". Analytic cognition "breaks down information into units which are dealt with sequentially, and syncretic cognition synthesizes information holistically".<sup>57</sup> A specific type of media will more effectively appeal to one type of cognition than to the other. Print media requires the ratiocinative, linear processing of analytic cognition. Analytic cognition is based upon "knowledge by description" which involves the interpretation of a lifetime of

---

<sup>55</sup> Damasio, xiii.

<sup>56</sup> Rood, 115.

<sup>57</sup> Chaudhuri, 109.

sensory data organized into a framework of thoughts and understanding and culminating in logical thought patterns about a problem, issue, or stimulus.<sup>58</sup> An example might be that of a harried New York commuter running through Time Square and glancing up at the electronic billboard flashing the message, “Dow up 20 points.” This message would be meaningless to him unless he had at some time learned what the Dow Jones Industrial Average was, understood the scale of movement (whether a 20 point move is significant or insignificant), and realized how this information might affect him. That is, he employed analytic cognition, or reason, based upon stored knowledge of the subject, to discern the meaning. Visual images of the electronic media encourage syncretic cognition. Syncretic cognition is based upon “knowledge by acquaintance” which does not involve thinking but instead involves recognizing. As Chaudhuri explains:

Knowledge by acquaintance cannot be explained but is “known” immediately by the person and may consist of sensations, bodily symptoms, drives and primary affects, such as happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). This is the process of immediate and self-evident subjective experience which William James (1890) wrote about: “I know the color blue when I see it, and the flavor of a pear when I taste it...but about the inner nature of these facts or what makes them what they are I can say nothing at all” (p.22). Knowledge by acquaintance is always syncretic: a holistic synthesis of information. In contrast, analytic cognition consists of “knowledge by description”, which results from the interpretation of sensory data and involves judgements about phenomena.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Ross Buck, “Emotion and Cognition: A Developmental-Interactionist Perspective.” Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (Toronto: April 25-28, 1985), 8.

<sup>59</sup> Chaudhuri, 111.



This distinction was observed as far back as “St. Augustine in De Magistro (Marsh, 1956), and is reflected in many languages, as in the French connaitre vs. savoir (James, 1890).”<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, in communication there are two streams of communication simultaneously flowing. One is based upon analytic cognition, in which the printed or spoken words are decoded and interpreted. The other is based upon syncretic cognition in which visual and audible aspects of the message are recognized and reacted to. The former is based upon learned and culturally specific symbols, and the other involves ‘built-in’ biologically based sending and receiving mechanisms.”<sup>61</sup> This latter “spontaneous” communication is not intentionally or consciously entered into by either sender or receiver, but can be influential and persuasive. Buck explains that, “Spontaneous communication may be thought of as a conversation between limbic systems.”<sup>62</sup> These different types of communication can be described thusly:

Symbolic communication is...communication in perhaps a more typical sense.... Symbolic communication is intentional and is based upon learned symbols that have an arbitrary relationship with their referents. Its content is propositional, in that it is capable of logical analysis: It can be false (Russell, 1948). Spontaneous communication cannot by definition be false: if the sign is there, its referent (the motivational/emotional state) must by definition be present.<sup>63</sup>

Some examples may be helpful to illustrate the importance of these concepts. In the 1960 presidential debate between John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, a majority of radio listeners concluded that Nixon was the clear winner.

---

<sup>60</sup> Buck, “Emotion and Cognition,” 7.

<sup>61</sup> Buck, “Emotional Education,” 48.

<sup>62</sup> Buck, “Emotional Education,” 49.

<sup>63</sup> Buck, “Emotional Education,” 49.

They decided this on the basis of the words that they heard, and processed through analytic cognition. The majority of the television viewers concluded that Kennedy was the winner despite having heard the same words in the debate.<sup>64</sup> Clearly something in the visual image affected their conclusion. That is to say that their decision was based on something more than on the logical, propositional argument that they and the radio listeners both heard. Their decision was the result of the symbolic and spontaneous communication coming through their television sets. Similarly, in a study conducted in 1985, watching video segments of President Reagan smiling induced viewers to smile, while watching him frown induced viewers to frown. These reactions were independent and unrelated to the viewers' prior attitude toward President Reagan.<sup>65</sup> This is an example of one person's (Reagan's) limbic system communicating with another's.

Advertising research has demonstrated that commercials can influence a person's choice of product selection through a number of illogical ways. That is to say that the consumer often uses heuristic mental processes to make a product choice. Some illustrations of the ways that the consumer might be influenced are:

- \*The consumer might like the music that is played during the commercial and associate that brand with the good feelings evoked by the music.

- \*The consumer might respond positively to the happy facial expressions of the actors in the commercial and connect that product to that feeling.

---

<sup>64</sup> Buck, "Conceptualizing," 440.

<sup>65</sup> Buck, "Conceptualizing," 440.

\*The consumer may associate disparate and unconnected but desirable items with the product when they appear often together on the screen (i.e. pretty girls and a Corvette)<sup>66</sup>

All this is to illustrate that the visual content contained in a multimedia presentation has the power to communicate in ways beyond the propositional, linear logic of symbolic communication typical of print. Not surprisingly studies have demonstrated that “electronic media engenders emotional and affective involvement, while print media engenders rational, analytic involvement.”<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, an advertiser whose commercial message is primarily suited to a rational argument in order to convince a consumer to buy the product (i.e. five reasons why Dupont polyethylene is a better product than the competitor’s product) would find advertising in print to be most efficacious. The advertiser whose primary appeal is an emotional bond with the product (i.e. a brand of men’s aftershave) would benefit by running an emotionally appealing advertisement on the television.<sup>68</sup>

Of course during any commercial or audiovisual presentation, both analytic and syncretic cognition is occurring. The deciding factor as to which one will be most dominant in the viewer’s mind is dictated by the amount of mental effort the viewer (or listener, or consumer) chooses to exert in analytic cognition. All people at times make choices based upon heuristic strategies precisely because they do not want to exert the mental effort required to make a reasoned decision at that moment.<sup>69</sup> One can imagine a mother with a crying child in the

---

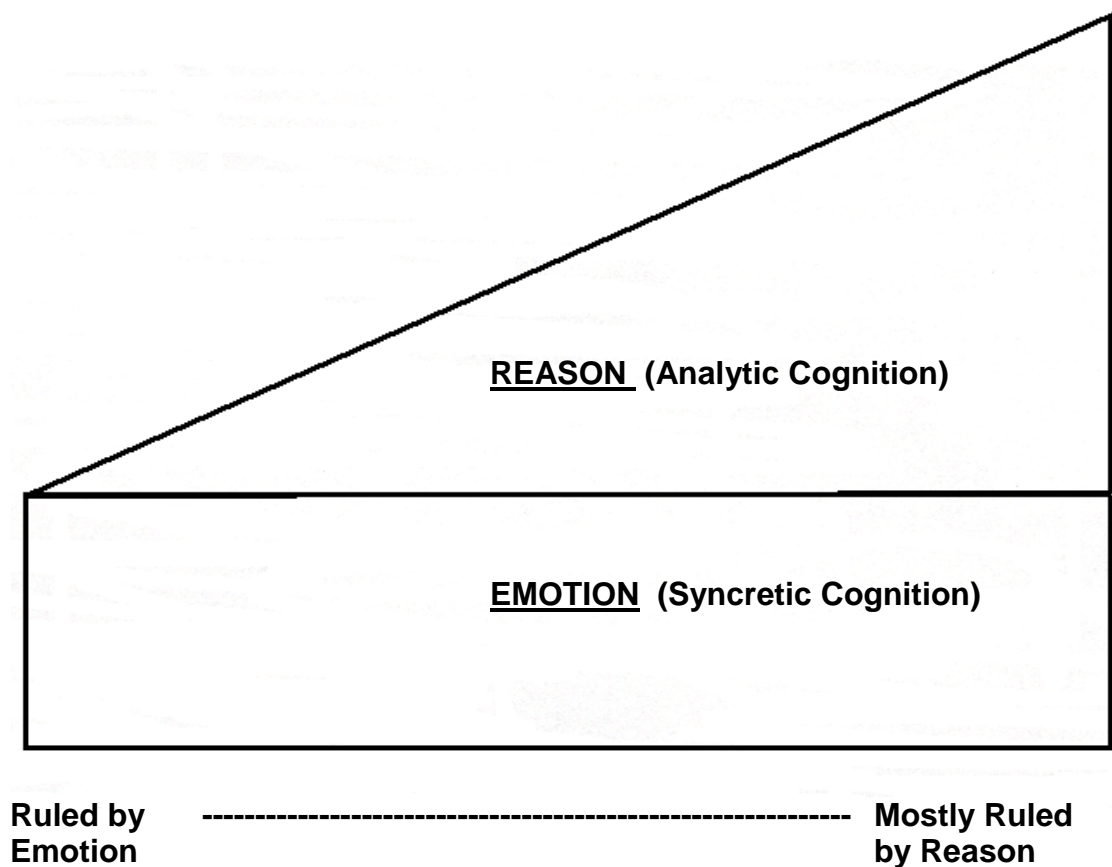
<sup>66</sup> Chaudhuri, 115.

<sup>67</sup> Chaudhuri, 117.

<sup>68</sup> Chaudhuri, 117.

<sup>69</sup> Chaudhuri, 112.

grocery cart hurrying down the toilet tissue aisle. Will she take the time to compare the square foot/dollar ratio, or will she remember the comical “Charmin Man” and grab that brand off the shelf? Often it will be the latter choice. Figure 1 demonstrates the relationship between syncretic cognition and analytic cognition. At the far left side of the continuum, reason exerts no affect on the decision-making process and emotional reaction rules. At the far right side of the continuum reason dominates, but the influence of emotion never falls to zero. Therefore, emotion is a constant force influencing a person’s thinking, reasoning, and decision-making.



**Figure 1. The Emotion-Reason Continuum<sup>70</sup>**

<sup>70</sup> Concept from Buck, “Conceptualizing,” 441.

## ***The Church's Historical Usage of Visual Images in Worship and Teaching***

Youth ministry appeared and blossomed in the second half of the twentieth century making it a recent innovation when viewed in the continuum of church history. The audiovisual presentations and computer generated slides that are widely employed in contemporary youth ministry are obviously a most recent invention. The use of visual images in the church does, however, have a long and, at times, controversial history. As shall be seen, the use of these images has waxed and waned, developed and evolved throughout church history due to the changing influences of theology, technology, geography, and culture.

### ***Image Usage in the Old Testament***

The first Christians were, of course, Jews and since their views of incorporating visual images into their teaching and worship would be strongly influenced by their tradition, it is important to explore the role and place of visual images in the Old Testament. Francis Schaeffer explores the inclusion of art in the tabernacle and temple more fully, but a brief examination of the inclusion of representational art in these places of worship will suffice to gain an appreciation of Jewish acceptance of these types of images.<sup>71</sup> The significance of this acceptance in view of the commandment not to create a graven image will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Firstly, the Tabernacle, the pattern for which was given to Moses directly by God, was itself meant to be a visual representation of its heavenly

---

<sup>71</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973).

counterpart.<sup>72</sup> In this sense it too can be considered to be a visual representational image. Further, as Schaffer points out, the tabernacle and its successor, Solomon's Temple, contained "almost every form of representational art that men have ever known."<sup>73</sup> Again this is significant because the Scripture teaches that the pattern for the architecture and for the furnishing of these places of worship came directly from God.<sup>74</sup>

The Ark of the Covenant, which rested in the Most Holy Place inside the tabernacle, was covered with a lid (commonly referred to as the "mercy seat") that was adorned with two gold cherubim.<sup>75</sup> These were three-dimensional statues representing angelic beings. The lampstands in the tabernacle were adorned with golden branches, flowers, buds, and blossoms.<sup>76</sup> The inside of the temple was overlaid with gold and adorned with palm tree and chain designs, flowers, and carved cherubim.<sup>77</sup> Inside the inner sanctuary of the temple Solomon placed two cherubim carved from olive wood and overlaid with gold, each about fifteen feet high and with a fifteen foot wingspan.<sup>78</sup> The pillars on the outside of the temple were adorned with bronze chains, pomegranates, and lilies. Twelve bronze bulls supported the cast bronze "sea", and adorning the movable stands were panels featuring lions, bulls, and cherubim.<sup>79</sup>

Therefore it can be seen that the Hebrew places of worship were replete with visual images. These images represented items from the natural world,

---

<sup>72</sup> Ex 25:9; Heb 9:23-24

<sup>73</sup> Schaeffer, *Art*, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Ex 25:9; 1 Chron 28:11-12, 19.

<sup>75</sup> Ex 25:17.

<sup>76</sup> Ex 25:31-40.

<sup>77</sup> 1 Ki 6:29-35; 2 Chron 3:4-7.

<sup>78</sup> 1 Ki 6:23-28.

<sup>79</sup> 1 Ki 7:13-29.

beings from the spiritual world, and inventions created by man. Significantly most all of these representations were prepared at the command of the Lord, and were not considered to violate the Second Commandment. However, as Jewish history unfolded, religious attitudes toward visual images fluctuated greatly. For example, during the Maccabean period (second century BC) the Jews rejected almost any kind of visual representation, while three centuries later the Jews of the Diaspora enthusiastically embraced them.<sup>80</sup>

Scripture also records, as Schaefer details, instances of what might be referred to as drama.<sup>81</sup> The prophets at various times displayed their messages visually, a form of performing art with a point. In the book of Ezekiel we read:

Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. Then take an iron pan, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel.<sup>82</sup>

Obviously this short drama depicting the coming siege (and eventual destruction) of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians was performed in front of an audience who would, it is assumed, comprehend the point. Ezekiel performs another visual drama in the succeeding chapter, in this case shaving his beard and dividing the hair, illustrating the fate of the people. Similarly, Jeremiah

---

<sup>80</sup> Eduard Syndicus, *Early Christian Art*, Faith and Fact Books: Catholic Truth in the Scientific Age, ed. Lancelot Sheppard, no. 116 (London: Burns and Oates, 1962), 8 and 12.

<sup>81</sup> Schaeffer, *Art*, 28.

<sup>82</sup> Ezek. 4:1-3. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations in this work are from the New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978).

smashed a clay jar in view of the elders and priests of Jerusalem to symbolize the smashing of the nation and that city in particular (Jeremiah 19).

### *The Early Church*

The use of art and visual images by the earliest Christians is difficult to assess since, if much ever existed, hardly any of it has survived history. The church of the first and second centuries was mostly poor, often persecuted, and as Syndicus puts it, “an underground church without the time or the leisure for artistic creation.”<sup>83</sup> The church was in many ways “invisible to the outside world.”<sup>84</sup> The only two extant windows of observation into the visual images used by these early believers come from their burial decorations and their houses of worship.

While most of the archeological remains come from the Roman world, Jean Danielou does recount interesting finds from Hebron, Nazareth, and Jerusalem. Here were discovered “ossuaries and funerary steles of unquestionably Judaeo-Christian character” from the Palestinian Christian community dating from late first and early second centuries. These items were visually adorned with early Christian symbols such as “the plough and the palm, the star and the growing plant, the cross and the fish.”<sup>85</sup>

The surviving catacombs of the Roman world are relatively numerous and well preserved and provide a clear picture into the symbols and visual art (at

---

<sup>83</sup> Syndicus, 29.

<sup>84</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 26.

<sup>85</sup> Jean Danielou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, trans. by Donald Attwater (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), viii.



least those used in burial purposes) of the Western Church. Early Christians adorned the walls and ceilings of these catacombs with many illustrations. Some of these are drawn from Old Testament scenes and stories such as Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge, Noah and the ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, Moses striking the rock, Daniel and the lion's den, and Jonah. Others are from the New Testament and depict the raising of Lazarus, the feeding of the multitude, the miracle at Cana, and the healing of the paralytic. Many symbols and symbolic figures are also painted such as the shepherd, an athlete's palm, a ship, and the fish.<sup>86</sup> It should be pointed out that many of these early drawings and images don't really qualify as "art." As Syndichus explains it, "The gap between intention and achievement is often only too obvious."<sup>87</sup> They were simple expressions of faith made by common believers.

Church buildings for the first three centuries were, from the exterior, indistinguishable from private dwellings. The interiors were adapted for worship by placing an altar in the largest room and decorating the walls with painted images.<sup>88</sup> Only one of these early Christian houses of worship survived history intact. This house church was found in Dura Europus, which was a "remote Roman frontier fortress on the middle Euphrates."<sup>89</sup> Before the Persians destroyed this town in 256 AD, the small church was knocked down and filled in by the Romans in an attempt to strengthen the town's walls, ironically ensuring the survival of the artwork inside. Syndicus describes the place of worship:

---

<sup>86</sup> Syndicus, 13-29; Dyrness, 26-27.

<sup>87</sup> Syndicus, 30.

<sup>88</sup> Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 46.

<sup>89</sup> Syndicus, 14.

The Christian place of worship was set up in 232 in the house of one Dositheos. The room for the celebration of the sacrifice remained uncompleted. On the apse-shaped back wall of the baptistery, over the font, there was a picture of the Good Shepherd with twelve sheep. Underneath were Adam and Eve: the fall and redemption of mankind. There were also pictures of David and Goliath, the Samaritan woman, the healing of the cripple, Christ on the water, and the wise virgins.<sup>90</sup>

It can be seen that these images from the house church in Dura Europus (which are consistent with the fragmentary frescoes found in the remains of other house churches) have great commonality with those found in the art of the catacombs. Themes that are notably absent in any extant examples of pre-Constantinian Christian images are portraits of Christ, depictions of the crucifixion, resurrection or ascension of Christ, and scenes of the Last Judgment.<sup>91</sup>

Christian sculpture began to appear in the third century, much later than painting, perhaps reflecting a resistance to three-dimensional images. Themes developed in this marble imagery are consistent with those explored in paint.<sup>92</sup>

The important element to recognize in the early Christians' use of images is that "the signs and symbols that early Christians chose were illative and mediated, not direct and unmediated."<sup>93</sup> That is to say that the scenes carved or painted, or the symbols inscribed represented a narrative or conveyed a meaning that would not be immediately apparent to the uninitiated but would be meaningful and significant to the catechized believer. For example, one had to know the Bible narrative to understand the meaning of the picture of the paralytic

---

<sup>90</sup> Syndicus, 14-15.

<sup>91</sup> Miles, 47.

<sup>92</sup> Dyrness, 27; Syndicus, 26-27.

<sup>93</sup> Paul Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 291; quoted in Dyrness, 26.

(now cured) carrying his mat. Similarly, a sculpture of a shepherd carrying the lost sheep would mean little to a pagan, but would remind the Christian that Christ is the Good Shepherd in whom he is to trust. The intended meaning of the fish symbol, the first letters of which in Greek spelled the word *fish* (Greek: *ichthus*), stood for the words *Jesus, Christ, God, Son, Savior*, and was known only to those in the church. Likewise the palms, an athlete's award for victory in the Greco-Roman world, reminded the believer of Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians to win the prize. A pagan looked upon these images and saw nothing that was especially meaningful, threatening, or unusual. The Christian looked upon them and was instructed, reminded, and encouraged.<sup>94</sup>

### *Post-Constantine*

After the conversion of Constantine and his issuance of the Edict of Toleration (also known as the Edict of Milan) in 313 AD, Christianity was no longer an illegal religion, and eventually (380 AD) became the official religion of the Roman Empire.<sup>95</sup> These developments ended the horrific persecutions that had plagued Christians in the Roman world and put the support of the empire behind the church. It is difficult to overstate the impact this had upon the church as it brought change to the liturgy, architecture, art, clergy, and composition of the body.<sup>96</sup> In regard to visual images and impressions, there was certainly a great transformation. While before the 313 AD, "Christianity had left no visible

---

<sup>94</sup> Dyrness, 26.

<sup>95</sup> Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco: Harper Row, 1984), 107; Miles, 59.

<sup>96</sup> Gonzalez, 124-128.

trace in Rome”, afterwards it left an unmistakable imprint by constructing large churches with beautiful interiors that were created to produce a strong visual impression.<sup>97</sup> Replacing the cramped house churches, spacious basilicas were constructed and filled with mosaics, polished marble, lamps, and tapestries.<sup>98</sup>

Margaret Miles describes the fourth-century basilicas:

Mosaics and wall paintings—like the double tier of Old Testament scenes in the nave of Saint Peter’s—both instructed and delighted the worshipper. A stunning array of colors, textures, and materials met the eye everywhere. At Saint John Lateran, for example, a huge silver fastigium was placed across the opening of the apse. Supported by a double row of columns it was composed of statues of silver beaten or hammered over a wooden core. Christ the teacher, seated among the apostles, faced the congregation, while Christ resurrected, enthroned between four angels, faced the clergy in the apse. The play of daylight, or at night the play of candles on sixty or seventy gold and silver candlesticks, on these silver statues must have been dazzling... Fourth-century churches were as lavish as they could possibly be made. Just as crowds of the more or less christianized converts who flocked to them in the fourth century...were accepted by the church, so these immense churches were evidently considered capable of accepting and containing artistic works of enormous ranges of styles, materials, subjects, and themes.<sup>99</sup>

The effect of this massive display of size and beauty was to unmistakably visually state to all who looked upon it that Jesus had triumphed over the old Roman Empire.<sup>100</sup>

Further, the visual display inside the basilicas was not meant to compete with the church’s teaching and preaching, but to complement it and elaborate upon it in ways that the people of the day would comprehend and appreciate.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Miles, 45.

<sup>98</sup> Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>99</sup> Miles, 53.

<sup>100</sup> Miles, 45.

<sup>101</sup> Dyrness, 31-32.

Eusebius, commenting on the cathedral at Tyre in Palestine, wrote that, “The cathedral is a marvel of beauty...the evidence of our eyes makes instruction through the ears unnecessary.”<sup>102</sup> From the fourth century and following, the church felt that images had the power and ability to arouse the emotions and concentrate the mind. The image did not just convey information but it also engaged the will.<sup>103</sup>

Augustine’s understanding of vision is helpful for understanding their thinking in this regard. Augustine’s theory of physical vision, which was influential and widely accepted, followed Plato’s. It held that the eye cast a visual ray out to “touch” the object in view. Hence, sight was an active endeavor that connected viewer and object in “dynamic communication.”<sup>104</sup> Hearing, on the other hand, was considered to be passive, as it requires no focusing on the part of the hearer. Further it was thought that the soul was affected in fundamental and structural ways by its imprinting by objects of vision. Therefore, in the fourth-century church, when catechumens were dismissed from the worship service after the prayers, Scripture reading, and homily, they were curtained off from the rest of the believers who were celebrating communion. They could hear the sacramental prayers and words of institution, but they could not see the elements, and hence, were not considered to be taking part in it. To see was to participate, while to hear was not.<sup>105</sup> From this can be seen the beginning of the

---

<sup>102</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 10.4.58 and 10.44.2, quoted in Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 49.

<sup>103</sup> Miles, 45.

<sup>104</sup> Miles, 45.

<sup>105</sup> Miles, 51.

elevation of the visual above the auditory, a prioritization that would not really be reversed until the Reformation.

By the dawn of the fifth century the western part of the Roman Empire was beginning to crumble. Barbarian invaders such as the Goths and Vandals eventually sacked Rome and settled into parts of the old empire establishing their own kingdoms. This period of barbarian conquest wrought enormous political and social upheaval and cultural change to the West. The eastern section of the old empire, however, commonly known as the Byzantine Empire, continued on for another thousand years, its fortunes waxing and waning. Whereas there existed an amazing homogeneity across Christendom before the fall of the Roman Empire, afterwards the western and eastern branches of the church began to drift apart. Even though technically both East and West comprised one church, in truth great differentiation was occurring, which would lead eventually to the Great Schism in 1054 AD. This separation was driven by greatly divergent political situations, cultural differences between the Greek-speaking East and Latin-speaking West, and diverging theological views. One aspect of this divergence of East and West can be seen in how each part of the church eventually came to view and understand images and pictures during the Middle Ages.<sup>106</sup>

### *The Eastern Church*

In the East developed a greater emphasis upon viewing salvation as a spiritual communion with God than existed in the West, where thinking was more

---

<sup>106</sup> Gonzalez, 217-265.

analytical and rational, and where salvation was understood in terms of reconciliation between man and God through Christ's death on the cross.<sup>107</sup>

While Christ's death was, of course, very significant in the East, it was the strong influence of the thinking of Athanasius that led the Byzantine church to emphasize the Incarnation as the key to understanding salvation.<sup>108</sup> This theological perspective had a profound effect upon how the Orthodox Church (as the church in the Byzantine Empire eventually became known) came to view and use images in liturgy and devotion.

Around 500 AD, Dionysius, the Pseudo-Areopagite, wrote an influential book expanding upon the ideas of Athanasius, entitled *Celestial Hierarchy*. In this book he described a mystical theology in which the goal of the faithful was a spiritual union with God through a process of escaping from the ratiocinative processes of the intellect. This form of mysticism held great sway in the East, and art became a tool in the church to move the worshipper from earthly to spiritual contemplation.<sup>109</sup>

The icon (Greek, *eikon*, which translated means *image*) developed in the Orthodox Church not just as an artistic style, but also as a theological statement and a part of worship. Pictures of "Christ and of the saints began to appear as isolated frontal figures", confronting the viewer, thus being more easily invoked.<sup>110</sup> These pictures, or icons as they are known, were not just meant to remind the viewer of the persons or events pictured, but were meant to be

---

<sup>107</sup> Dyrness, 33.

<sup>108</sup> Gonzalez, 173-179; Dyrness, 34-38.

<sup>109</sup> Dyrness, 35.

<sup>110</sup> Dyrness, 35.

transparent so that the viewer could look through the image to the divine or sacred presence they represented.<sup>111</sup> This is what Schaeffer means when he says that Byzantine art did not, for example, picture Mary and Christ realistically, but as symbols.<sup>112</sup> By symbols he does not mean a symbolic representation such as picturing Christ as a lamb, or shepherd as had been done in the early church, but rather he means that there is no attempt to paint them in a natural way, or in a natural setting. They are purposely presented in a stylized manner to accomplish a specific goal. An icon is a two-dimensional picture in which the primary (and often only) figure faces the viewer and fills the frame. The eyes are depicted as large and expressive, and the scene as a whole is meant to have an “otherworldly” appearance.<sup>113</sup> Regarding icons, Zelensky and Gilbert write:

The language of sacred iconography has been nearly lost in the West. The complex and enlightening symbolism, bearing witness to incarnation, to Christian doctrine, to beauty, and to truth, is overlooked. This is a sad loss, since icons and frescoes once served the universal church as “Bibles without words,” as a means of accessing the transcendent realm through our limited senses. Icons have long been regarded in Eastern Christianity as “windows to heaven.”<sup>114</sup>

Williams expands upon the description of icons, saying:

An icon is a surface: you can’t walk around it but only look at it, and, hopefully, through it. It insists that you don’t treat it as an object with which you share a bit of space. In the icon, what you see is human beings and situations as they are in the light of God’s action. When you draw a diagram or even a map, you have to pick out the elements of the view that you need in order to convey what this

---

<sup>111</sup> Dyrness, 35.

<sup>112</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming Revell, 1976), 57.

<sup>113</sup> Elizabeth Zelensky and Lela Gilbert, *Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 33; Rowan Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with Icons of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), xviii.

<sup>114</sup> Zelensky, 16-17.



drawing is for; it is a bit like that with an icon. It doesn't seek for photographic realism; like the lines of a diagram, the lines of an icon tell you what it is in the subject matter that is significant, that conveys God's working. And you need to...allow yourself to be worked on—perhaps we should say, allow yourself to be looked at by God, rather than just looking at something yourself...in their [the icons'] presence you become aware that you are present to God and that God is working on you by his grace.<sup>115</sup>

To help westerners better understand icons, Zelensky lists what icons are not, and what they are:

- An icon is not intended to be a work of art illustrating an incident from Christ's life or a theme of Christian theology.
- An icon is not simply a material reflection of a spiritual reality.
- An icon is not an accessory or accoutrement to the act of worship.
- An icon is not an idol.
- An icon is an instrument through which the knowledge of God, in his mysterious human incarnation, becomes accessible to humankind.
- An icon is the physical witness to the sanctification of matter.
- An icon is a means by which both iconographer and worshiper can participate in the realm of eternity.<sup>116</sup>

It is significant to the Eastern understanding of icons that an iconographer (as the name implies) does not paint or draw an icon, but rather *writes* it. The actual writing of the icon is the culmination of a process of fasting, prayer and meditation. The word *writing* in describing the production of the icon is intended

---

<sup>115</sup> Williams, xviii-xix.

<sup>116</sup> Zelensky, 21-22.

to demonstrate the image's grounding in the text of Scripture. The iconographer writes the meaning of a portion of text "using images rather than words."<sup>117</sup>

So complete was the penetration of the icon and its accompanying theology of the image that in 692 AD, the Council of Trullo "repudiated the earlier symbolic art of the church in favor of the icon."<sup>118</sup> Dyrness explains:

The eighty-second canon of this council reveals the clearest indication of the growing division between the Eastern and Western traditions. Symbolic representations of Christ as the Lamb, for example, were forbidden. The reason for this was that the Lamb was a "typos" or figure of the coming grace, which was truly and fully realized in Christ. Signs were to be respected, the canon reasoned, but priority belonged to the truth of which the sign was a type. Therefore, the council prescribed that Christ should be depicted as a man in remembrance of his actual incarnation, passion, and the universal redemption available in him. Not only did this decision repudiate the symbolic quality of earlier Christian art but also its fundamental narrative intent, and even more its historical orientation.<sup>119</sup>

In this document it can be seen that the icon was more than a picture, it embodied a theological statement regarding the incarnation. The church in the East, with its theological emphasis on the incarnation, saw in the icon a visual statement and answer to the Christological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The acceptance of icons in the East, however, was at times contested. During the eighth century a few Byzantine emperors resisted the use of icons and in 754 Emperor Constantine V called a council that forbade the use of icons altogether. There are several possible reasons for this backlash and Constantine V's exact thinking is unknown. At the time, the empire was in contact and conflict

---

<sup>117</sup> Zelensky 24.

<sup>118</sup> Dyrness, 36-37.

<sup>119</sup> Dyrness, 36.

with Islam, which strongly repudiated the construction of any type of image.<sup>120</sup>

The veneration of icons made many uncomfortable as it resembled worship in their eyes and recalled the warnings of fourth-century church fathers against the idolatry of images.<sup>121</sup> The emperor may even have wanted to curb the influence of the monastic element in the empire, which was almost universally supportive of icons.<sup>122</sup> In any case, for decades the empire was divided between *iconoclasts* (destroyers of icons) and *iconodules* (worshippers of icons).

The iconodules triumphed at the Seventh Ecumenical Council convened at Nicea in 787 AD. This council differentiated between *latreia*, which is worship due only to God, and *dulia* (or *proskynesis*), which is veneration considered appropriately given to icons of Christ and the saints.<sup>123</sup> The council adopted the opinions of John of Damascus who wrote:

In former times, God without body or form, could in no way be represented. But today, since God has appeared in the flesh and lived among men I can represent what is visible in God. I do not venerate matter, but I venerate the creator of matter, who became matter for my sake, who assumed life in the flesh, and who, through matter, accomplished my salvation. Never will I cease to honor the matter which brought about my salvation.<sup>124</sup>

The theological statement regarding the incarnation engendered in the icon trumped the concerns of the iconoclasts in the minds of the majority of the Eastern Church. The icons visually pictured the humanity of Christ and were not only allowed but also insisted upon. In 842 AD this decision was permanently

---

<sup>120</sup> Gonzalez, 259.

<sup>121</sup> Miles, 44.

<sup>122</sup> Gonzalez, 260.

<sup>123</sup> Gonzalez, 260; Zelensky, 31-32.

<sup>124</sup> John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, quoted in Zelensky, 32.

adopted and this event is still celebrated today in the Orthodox Church as the Triumph of Orthodoxy (or the Feast of Orthodoxy).<sup>125</sup>

The liturgical and ritualistic use of icons continued and flourished into the eleventh-century where it became fully developed, the period of time known as the “second golden age of Byzantine art.”<sup>126</sup> All this time the East had a varying degree of influence on the Western Church tradition, especially through the art of Venice, which maintained contact with it.<sup>127</sup> The use of icons in the East continues, little changed, to the present day.<sup>128</sup>

### *The Western Church in the Middle Ages*

While the Eastern Church, pushed by its theological emphasis upon the Incarnation, drifted toward the use and veneration of icons, in the West the church followed a different path. Its emphasis upon Christ’s redemption of Man at the cross led to its predominant visual images being focused upon this event. The crucifix, Christ suffering on the cross, the Lamb, the symbolic representation of Jesus as the sacrifice, the chalice, the symbol of Christ’s blood poured out for salvation, became the common images articulating this reality. It should be observed that these are precisely the symbolic images that the Council of Trullo rejected in the East.

Schaeffer points out that by the middle of the sixth century, both in the West and in the East, artistic realism had been abandoned. Whereas earlier

---

<sup>125</sup> Dyrness, 37; Gonzalez, 260; Zelensky, 31-32.

<sup>126</sup> Dyrness, 37.

<sup>127</sup> Dyrness, 38.

<sup>128</sup> Williams, xvi.

Christian art had depicted real people in a real world, in the Middle Ages Christian art took on an otherworldly character. People were depicted not in the real world of time and space but in an eternal, spiritualized setting. Of course, in the West after the fall of the Roman Empire, much artistic technical knowledge was lost including the Roman use of perspective, which necessarily altered how images were presented. Additionally, humanistic elements crept into the church that emphasized man's earning the favor of Christ and de-emphasized Christ's unmerited favor based on faith. Further, the authority of the Roman Church began to be emphasized above the authority of the Scripture. These humanistic influences had an impact upon how people of the time thought and therefore impacted the visual elements used by and incorporated into the church. Schaeffer summarizes saying, "Much of Christianity up until the sixteenth century was either reaction against or reaffirmation of these distortions of the original Christian, biblical teaching."<sup>129</sup>

In 1140 Abbot Suger constructed Saint-Denis, a church that was the first to introduce what became known as the Gothic style. The choir section contained the pointed arches and many large, high windows that came to typify the style.<sup>130</sup> The light and airy atmosphere created by this architectural innovation stood in sharp contrast to the Romanesque churches, which were being constructed up until that time. The Romanesque style featured rounded, "Roman arches", thick walls, and dim interiors (the dimness created by the

---

<sup>129</sup> Schaffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, 30-35.

<sup>130</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, 47; Dyrness, 39.

limitation of the architecture which could not provide sufficient window space to allow a flood of natural light).<sup>131</sup>

Expanding upon the design innovations of Saint-Denis, a group of reform-minded monks settled in Paris and in the middle of the twelfth century constructed a church (the predecessor of Notre Dame Cathedral) that more fully incorporated the Gothic stylistic distinctives. The “soaring arches, tracery, (thin) “curtain walls”...flying buttresses, and stained glass windows, which were able to reach a great height” were all present here.<sup>132</sup> The cathedrals of Chartres (1194), Strasbourg (1220), and Reims (1230) continued and developed this style.<sup>133</sup>

The Gothic cathedral was more than an architectural development, however. The visual space created was used to express the worldview of the church pictorially. Dyrness explains:

These great structures, which must have been extremely impressive amid the modest buildings around them, not only became the center of the social and religious life of the community but were actually intended to be a microcosm of the world at large. An image of the last judgment was frequently located over the central portal of the cathedral (see, for example, the portal at Armeins...), reminding those entering of God’s certain judgment, which was only avoided by entering and eating the holy food of the Eucharist. The space of the church represented the “ark of salvation”. On either side of the portal were images of the prophets and apostles, on whose words rested the hope of God’s people. Inside the worshipper was drawn both forward and upward toward the altar, placed at the central and raised position, where the body and blood of Christ, the bread of heaven, and the cup of salvation were distributed. The sculptured figures and scenes, the light cast on the altar, even the space itself were all

---

<sup>131</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, 46.

<sup>132</sup> Dyrness, 39.

<sup>133</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, 47; Dyrness, 39.

shaped to give expression to the teachings of the church. Together they represented a unified worldview.<sup>134</sup>

It can be seen, then, that the worshipper of the period would be immersed in a flood of visual images, both architecturally and pictorially, which were meant to instruct and to stimulate his worship and spiritual devotion. The pictorial images were not like those in the East, though, which were meant to be windows or conduits to the spiritual reality behind them. In the West, the visual images tended to emphasize biblical narratives and events, and were meant to remind the worshipper of the stories and the spiritual truths that they represented.<sup>135</sup>

Reform movements within the Roman Church spurred many of the advances and development in the visual culture of the latter Middle Ages. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and the Franciscan order that followed his teaching, with their emphasis upon true faith and genuine and personal love for God inspired artists such as Giotto di Bondone (d. 1337) to move beyond the conventions of the day. Giotto painted real-to-life characters expressing genuine emotion in real space, a marked contrast to the stylized art of the East. One hundred years later, inspired by the Dominican order (founded by Dominic of Spain, d. 1221), Massacio (d. 1428) painted in the same fashion, his figures being more precise and accurately depicted. Many other artists, inspired by both traditions, produced wonderful religious art moving the *state of the art* forward. It

---

<sup>134</sup> Dyrness, 39-40.

<sup>135</sup> Dyrness, 41.

should be noted that though these artists utilized great innovations in their paintings, their theological purpose was never lost.<sup>136</sup>

This plethora of visual stimulation was not matched, however, with auditory instruction. The elevation of the eye above the ear led to a reliance and emphasis upon the use of visual images and almost a complete diminishment of the auditory in the church of the Middle Ages. By the eleventh century in the Roman church it was the custom of the celebrant to turn his back on the congregation and recite the Mass, in Latin, in an inaudible whisper.<sup>137</sup> The ringing of the bell gained the attention of the people for them to look upon the elevated host. At that time, participating visually with the consecrated bread was considered equal to ingesting it, and many left the service after the elevation.<sup>138</sup> Perspective on this practice is gained by considering the words of Meister Eckhart, a Dominican preacher and theologian, who, reflecting Augustine's understanding of vision, wrote in the fourteenth century, "for hearing I am passive, and seeing I am active."<sup>139</sup> Further, the lack of verbal instruction during the worship service was not being compensated for in other ways. There seems to have been almost a complete lack of confirmation instruction in the Western Church during the latter Middle Ages. Miles explains that, "a balanced equilibrium between language for instruction and clarification and visual images

---

<sup>136</sup> Dyrnass, 40-50.

<sup>137</sup> Miles, 97.

<sup>138</sup> Miles, 96-97.

<sup>139</sup> Meister Eckhart, "This is Another Sermon," in Meister Eckhart, trans. Raymond Blakeney (New York: Harper Row, 1941), 108, quoted in Miles, 101.



to direct and increase devotional piety had eluded the late-medieval Roman church.”<sup>140</sup>

### *From the Reformation to the Twentieth Century*

When in 1517 Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, he was not initiating an action out of a vacuum, but was really continuing a cry for reform that had begun centuries earlier. Though Luther’s time was the tipping point of history, other reformers had preceded him proclaiming, with various degrees of thoughtfulness and clarity, the need for reform within the Roman Church. As previously mentioned, Francis of Assisi and Dominic of Spain had attempted to reform the piety of the Church in the thirteenth century. John Wycliffe (d. 1384) produced a translation of the Bible in English and taught that the Bible alone, and not the Church of Rome, was to be the supreme authority for Christians. Similarly, John Huss (d. 1415) of Prague emphasized the authority of the Scripture, and that man’s salvation came from Christ’s work alone, not from a collaborative effort involving good works by the individual. Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican monk preached in Florence against some of the problems in the Catholic Church (though not as clearly as did Wycliffe and Huss), until he was hanged and his body burned in 1498.<sup>141</sup>

The Brethren of the Common Life whose members included Thomas a Kempis

---

<sup>140</sup> Miles, 98.

<sup>141</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, 79-80.

(d. 1471) and Rudolph Agricola (d. 1485) emphasized personal prayer, Bible study, and a return to early church practices.<sup>142</sup>

It will be noted that all of these men advocated a relationship with God that was unmediated. Images or representational art were unnecessary for the believer to connect with his Lord. Huss and Wycliffe specifically emphasized a return to the word, that is to say, an engagement with God facilitated through the words of the Scripture. The ideas of these men stand in stark contrast to the latter Middle Age's general dependence upon, and overuse of images in worship and devotion.

By the time Ulrich Zwingli (also spelled Huldreich Zwingli) arrived at the Grossmunster church in Zurich in 1518, the state of image usage had reached a startling climax. The church was filled with elaborate decorations, paintings, and statues. It boasted seventeen altars and multiple elaborate side chapels.<sup>143</sup> It also contained an especially elaborate visual element, an "Easter grave", the use and appearance of which Garside describes as follows:

For this sight the pilgrim was prepared symbolically on entering the chapel, since over the portal leading down into it was a wall painting of Christ standing in the tomb with the instruments of His passion on either side. Once the pilgrim had descended, he would have seen a wooden sepulchre under a canopy supported by pillars, likewise of brilliantly painted wood. Surrounding the sepulcher were large wooden statues of Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Saint John, while in it, wrapped in a white coverlet with silken tassels, was laid a wooden replica of the body of Christ, which was removed from the grave on Easter Sunday...On Palm Sunday, in Zurich...[the practice arose] of drawing down the nave of the Great Minster a wooden donkey bearing a statue of Christ. Just as His entry into Jerusalem had to be enacted before their eyes to be fully comprehended, so, too, His agony in the garden. Hence, outside the Great Minster, against

---

<sup>142</sup> Dyrness, 52.

<sup>143</sup> Miles, 98.

either the north or the west wall, there stood under a canopy a group of figures representing Christ with His disciples on the Mount of Olives. His effigy in the Easter-Grave enabled them to meditate on His dead body wrapped in the linen shroud. Even the miracle of the Ascension had to be presented to them visually, so that on Ascension Thursday a huge image of Christ was slowly raised up from the floor of the choir until it disappeared from the people's sight through a hole in the vaulting contrived especially for the purpose.<sup>144</sup>

From this description the extent of the Roman Church's dependence upon visual elements can be clearly seen. Worshippers were accustomed to visual displays that played to their emotions, but were unaccustomed to employing their ears and their "discursive intellect."<sup>145</sup> Further, the usage of images in the church was increasing rapidly. It is estimated that only one in one hundred of the paintings and statues that confronted Zwingli in Grossmunster in 1518 had existed before 1500.<sup>146</sup> The situation was such that even Erasmus claimed that, before the leaders of the Reformation lodged their criticisms against the improper use of images in the church, he had condemned such practices as "images...be(ing) treated as if they were alive; that people...bow their heads, fall on the ground, or crawl on their knees before them, and that worshippers...kiss or fondle the carvings."<sup>147</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Protestant reformers addressed the usage of visual elements in the church. What might be considered surprising is the great variance of opinion that existed among these men. In fact, attitudes

---

<sup>144</sup> C. Garside, *Zwingli and the Arts* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), 89, 92-93; as quoted in Miles, 98-99.

<sup>145</sup> Miles, 99.

<sup>146</sup> Miles, 102.

<sup>147</sup> Miles, 99.

and actions toward images was one of the elements least agreed upon by the early Reformation leaders.<sup>148</sup>

Luther's view was uncharacteristically moderate. Dyrness describes Luther's attitude saying, "Luther was more open to the use of images in worship and in private devotion, based upon his emphasis of justification by faith. Once one is justified one is free to use images if they are helpful; on the other hand, if one does not believe, no image will help."<sup>149</sup> This is not to say that Luther did not appreciate the power that images have once they are placed in the memory. He stated, "Whether I will or not, when I hear of Christ, an image of a man hanging on a cross takes form in my heart, just as the reflection of my face naturally appears in the water when I look into it."<sup>150</sup> However, Luther understood that pictures and images, though potentially burdensome as shown in the previous quotation, could also be beneficial when subordinated to biblical truth and good teaching.<sup>151</sup> He wrote, "I am not of the opinion that all of the arts should be crushed to earth and perish through the Gospel, as some bigoted persons pretend, but would willingly see them all...servants of Him who gave and created them."<sup>152</sup> Luther included printed pictures in his pamphlets printed for wide distribution, and urged such illustrations to be placed into the first edition of his German Bible, published in 1534. It should be noted that these black and white illustrations were not as emotionally powerful as large oil paintings, nor were they

---

<sup>148</sup> Miles, 100.

<sup>149</sup> Dyrness, 52.

<sup>150</sup> *Luther's Works*, general ed. Helmut Lehmann (vols. 1-39, St. Louis: Concordia; vols. 31-35, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-), vol. 29, 244, quoted in Miles, 107.

<sup>151</sup> Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe*, Christianity and Society in the Modern World, eds. Hugh McLeod and Bob Scribner (New York: Routledge, 1993), 38.

<sup>152</sup> Martin Luther, *Wittenberg Gesangbuch*; quoted in Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, 90.

used in worship or displayed in a place of worship. Also, they were frequently denoted so as to make their meaning clear.<sup>153</sup> Luther went further, however. He argued, contradicting more iconoclastic reformers, that it would be appropriate to paint Christian themes and to display them, though not in the church sanctuary, saying:

I myself have seen and heard the iconoclasts read out of the German Bible...Now there are a great many pictures in those books, both of God, the angels, men, and animals, especially in the revelation of John and in Moses and Joshua. So now we would kindly beg them to permit us to do what they themselves do. Pictures contained in these books we could paint on walls for the sake of remembrance and better understanding, since they do no more harm on walls than in books. It is, to be sure, better to paint pictures on walls of how God created the world, of how Noah built the ark, and whatever other good stories there may be, than to paint shamelessly worldly things. Yes, would to God I could persuade the rich and the mighty that they would permit the whole Bible to be painted on houses, on the inside and outside, so that all could see it. That would be a Christian work.<sup>154</sup>

It should be observed that what Luther has in mind is using images to reinforce the understanding and remembering of the Bible stories for the betterment of the believer. In the case of the woodcuts used to print the pictures included in his pamphlets, Luther's purpose was to illustrate and reinforce the point contained in the printed words. This representational art, in contrast with the majority of art produced before the Reformation, did not contain a higher or independent theological purpose. It was subordinated to the word.<sup>155</sup>

In sharp contrast with Luther's view was that of his senior colleague at the University of Wittenberg, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. Luther and

---

<sup>153</sup> Miles, 115.

<sup>154</sup> *Luther's Works*, vol. 40, 99; quoted in Miles, 115, and Michalski, 28.

<sup>155</sup> Dyrness, 55.

Karlstadt had been collaborating since 1517, and in 1519 participated as equals in the debate with Johannes Eck in Leipzig. Their differing views on the image question, though, drove them into sharp disagreement by 1524.<sup>156</sup> Karlstadt, although having been raised in the same environment as Luther, could not tolerate Luther's acceptance of a positive use for images by the believer. He insisted on an immediate removal of all images from the eyes of Christians.<sup>157</sup> This may have been due to his greater fear of the potentially lasting negative impact that images might have upon an individual. He wrote:

My heart since childhood has been brought up in the veneration of images, and a harmful fear has entered me which I would gladly rid myself of, and cannot...When one pulls someone by the hair, then one notices how firmly the hair is rooted. If I had not heard the spirit of God crying out against the idols, and had not read His Word, I would have thought thus: "I do not love images." "I do not fear images." But now I know how I stand in this matter in relation to God and the images, and how firmly and deeply images are rooted in my heart.<sup>158</sup>

Karlstadt felt it better to remove all images rather than to tolerate the potential return of the abuses previously visited upon the church by the misuse of images.

Ulrich Zwingli did not share Karlstadt's personal fear of images, yet did not embrace Luther's acceptance of them either. In fact, in Zurich, Zwingli was a member of a committee (made up of two other clergymen and members of the various guilds) that in thirteen days, from June 20 to July 2, 1524, stripped every form of representational art from all the churches in the city and repainted their interiors a uniform white. So thorough was the cleansing that no statues survived

---

<sup>156</sup> Michalski, 44.

<sup>157</sup> Miles, 107.

<sup>158</sup> Carl C. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press), 25; quoted in Miles, 108.

at all, and fewer than one in ten pre-Reformation paintings.<sup>159</sup> Oddly, Zwingli wrote that he was a great admirer of art saying, “There is no one who is a greater admirer of paintings, statues, and images than I.”<sup>160</sup> While it may seem that Zwingli’s concern was based upon his attachment to images, in reality it was not. Zwingli was an excellent musician and, as such, found it impossible to worship when music was included in the service. His attention irresistibly was drawn away from the act of worshipping by consideration of the music’s composition and performance. Consequently, he forbade the use of music of any sort from all services of worship in Zurich, a step that was inconsistent with the rest of the Protestant reformers who made great use of Christian music. Hence, Zwingli’s opposition to images was empathetically given for those for whom images would be the same type of stumbling block that music was for him.<sup>161</sup> He did, however, allow religious art, even pictures depicting the incarnated Christ, to be kept in private homes so long as these objects did not become idols for the inhabitants.<sup>162</sup>

John Calvin’s views regarding the use of images by Christians were thoroughly conceived and strongly expressed in his work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In this book Calvin begins by examining the Bible’s teaching regarding the subject, especially focusing on the Second Commandment and the teachings of the prophets, and then specifically attacking the practices of the Roman Church in the west and the Orthodox Church in the east. Regarding the

---

<sup>159</sup> Miles, 102-103.

<sup>160</sup> *Huldreich Zwinglis Samtliche Werke*, in *Corpus Reformation*, ed. Emil Egli, et al (Leipzig, 1927), vol. 91, 3,906,1-2; quoted in Miles, 108

<sup>161</sup> Miles, 108.

<sup>162</sup> Michalski, 56.

Eastern Church's assertion that icons do not violate the Second Commandment because they are not three-dimensional, Calvin argues:

And it is to be observed that the thing forbidden is *likeness*, whether sculptured or otherwise. This disposes of the frivolous precaution taken by the Greek Church. They think they do admirably because they have no sculptured shape of deity, while none go greater lengths in the licentious use of pictures. The Lord, however, not only forbids any image of himself to be erected by a statuary, but to be formed by any artist whatever, because every such image is sinful and insulting to his majesty.<sup>163</sup>

Calvin similarly exposes what he sees as a distinction without a difference in the Greek Church's differentiating between idolodulia and idolatria, saying that "they think themselves blameless if they are only the *servants*, and not the *worshippers*, of idols; as if it were not a lighter matter to *worship* than to *serve*."<sup>164</sup> Turning his attention to the historical practice of the Roman Church, and specifically the teaching of Gregory the Great, a sixth-century pope who said that images were the Bible of the uneducated masses,<sup>165</sup> Calvin wrote:

I am not ignorant, indeed, of the assertion, which is now more than threadbare, "that images are the books of the unlearned." So said Gregory: But the Holy Spirit gives a different decision; and had Gregory got his lesson in this matter in the Spirit's school, he never would have spoken as he did...the general doctrine to be inferred certainly is that everything respecting God which is learned from images is futile and false...I add (what must be obvious to all), that the prophets utterly condemn what the Papists hold to be an undoubted axiom—viz. that images are substitutes for books.<sup>166</sup>

Consequently, for Calvin, there was no place for the visual representations in a place of Christian worship, except for the "living symbols" which Christ gave to

---

<sup>163</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), I, xi, 4.

<sup>164</sup> Calvin, I, xi, 11.

<sup>165</sup> Miles, 44.

<sup>166</sup> Calvin, I, xi, 5.



His church, namely baptism and the Lord's supper.<sup>167</sup> He did not, however, condemn all use of images by Christians outside of the worship context. He recognized that sculpture and painting that illustrated historical and biblical events could be "of some use for instruction or admonition."<sup>168</sup>

In discussing the basic iconoclasm of the Protestant reformers, and of the common people of the Protestant Reformation,<sup>169</sup> the root cause of the (sometimes violent) reaction against images must be considered. First the reason that representational art was removed from churches and destroyed may be deemed to be counterintuitive. Miles states it best saying, "Sixteenth-century people destroyed images not because they loved them too little...but because they loved them too much and found themselves too attached to them."<sup>170</sup> That is to say that newly converted people who had been formerly dependent upon religious visual images felt that they had to destroy them in order to be free from them. A humble iconoclastic cobbler from Orlamunde, while addressing Luther regarding the proper use of images, passionately admitted that, "he too was once an idolater and that to forestall the danger for others all images should be abolished."<sup>171</sup> In some cases, the "actual donors of the images smashed them because they represented religiously that which they now rejected as

---

<sup>167</sup> Calvin, I, xi, 13.

<sup>168</sup> Calvin, I, xi, 12.

<sup>169</sup> At Strasbourg, a committee of laymen (including a fisherman, a member of the draper's guild, and a carpenter) who were aggravated by the town council's slow response to removing art from the churches, wrote the following as part of a petition: "We see all images as evil for they appeal not to the perfected Christians but to the weak and those whom the word has not yet possessed." Miriam Crisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967); 148, quoted in Miles, 104.

<sup>170</sup> Miles, 107.

<sup>171</sup> Michalski, 24.

unbiblical.”<sup>172</sup> Much like an alcoholic finds that he must quit alcohol completely to be free from it, so the people of the Reformation felt that they had to completely put away visual images.

Schaeffer rightly points out regarding the images that filled churches at the time of the Reformation, that the donor (of the Middle Ages) and the destroyer (of the Reformation) were both motivated by eternal salvation.<sup>173</sup> The difference between the two stemmed from their differing theological perspectives. Prior to the Reformation, the common piety of the people was objective. One attended mass, went on a pilgrimage, said the rosary, gave money, or paid homage to a saint. The state of mind (or of faith) of the person carrying out these actions was not considered to be as important as the actions themselves. The Reformation, however, transformed personal piety from being objective to being subjective. What was now considered to be of primary importance was the personal faith of the individual.<sup>174</sup> That faith was developed and sustained through the proclamation of the Word. The Reformation introduced a fundamental transformation in the way that believers grasped and articulated Christian truth. Rather than exciting the peoples’ emotions through visual stimulation, the reformers brought them to faith by speaking to their minds through a rational exposition of the Bible. In Zurich, Zwingli transformed the faith of the city when he preached through the entire New Testament, going verse by verse, and taking only the Greek text with him into the pulpit. Likewise, Luther emphasized the

---

<sup>172</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 89.

<sup>173</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 89.

<sup>174</sup> Dyrness 54.

reading and preaching of the Scripture.<sup>175</sup> Calvin also considered that it was by encountering the Word that true faith was engendered. He wrote:

His [God's] injunction is, that the doctrine common to all should there be set forth by the preaching of the Word...a doctrine to which little heed can be given by those whose eyes are carried to and fro gazing at idols...The simple reason why those who had the charge of churches resigned the office of teaching to idols was, because they themselves were dumb. Paul declares, that by the true preaching of the gospel Christ is portrayed and in a manner crucified before our eyes (Gal. iii 1). Of what use, then, were the erection in churches of so many crosses of wood and stone, silver and gold, if this doctrine were faithfully and honestly preached—viz., Christ died that he might bear our curse upon the tree, that he might expiate our sins by the sacrifice of his body, wash them in his blood, and, in short, reconcile us to God the Father? From this one doctrine the people would learn more than from a thousand crosses of wood and stone.<sup>176</sup>

In short, the Reformation reintroduced a way of approaching God directly, in an unmediated (by images) fashion, through personal faith gained by hearing and believing the proclaimed Word of God.

This emphasis upon language above image even influenced how children were instructed regarding the living out of their faith commitments. In 1419, Giovanni Dominici, the Florentine Dominican, wrote the following regarding the religious education of children in the fifteenth century:

The first regulation is to have pictures of saintly children or young virgins in the home, in which your child, still in swaddling clothes, may take delight and thereby may be gladdened by acts and signs pleasing to childhood...Make of such pictures a sort of temple in the house.<sup>177</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> Miles, 104.

<sup>176</sup> Calvin, I, xi, 7.

<sup>177</sup> Miles, 114.

In vivid contrast to this fifteenth-century emphasis upon learning through visual impression are the sixteenth-century ideas of Christoph Vischer, who, emphasizing learning through language, wrote in 1578:

...all parents are obliged on danger of losing their souls to teach the catechism to their children and domestic servants. Every day, let your children recite the main articles of the catechism, taking care that they speak clearly and pronounce distinctly. Ask them also what they remember from last Sunday's sermon, and, if they remember nothing, admonish them to pay closer attention. And if kind words don't help, take the stick to them or give them nothing to eat and drink for supper until they have repeated something from the sermon.<sup>178</sup>

This tectonic shift in understanding how one approaches God also led to alterations in the physical appearance of churches, and to the content of the worship services conducted within them. As mentioned, virtually all works of art were removed from church buildings. The elaborate altars were also removed and replaced with bare communion tables. The churches came to resemble lecture halls, as care was taken to remove all visual elements that might distract from the Word, read, preached, or sung.<sup>179</sup> The *rood screen*, a high grill of wood or iron that separated the congregation from the altar in pre-Reformation churches, was removed. In its place was often set a Bible to demonstrate that it was through the teaching of the Scripture that man could come to true faith.<sup>180</sup> Pews were added which allowed the people to sit and close their eyes during prayers—making visual elements irrelevant. During the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the celebrant now faced the congregation, allowing his words to be heard. Hymnals were printed (utilizing the newly invented printing press) and the

---

<sup>178</sup> Miles, 114.

<sup>179</sup> Miles, 104-105.

<sup>180</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 87-88.

people allowed to sing. Finally, the sermon lengthened and became the focus of the service.<sup>181</sup>

The move away from incorporating visual images into the church had an immediate impact upon the art produced during and following the Reformation. Having been removed from any worship or devotional applications, art now belonged solely to the private, secular realm. That is not to say, however, that there were not wonderful Christian artists who incorporated their thoroughly Christian worldview into their art. Much of it depicted scenes from Scripture, with an intentional theological viewpoint. Also, landscapes, portraits, and still-life paintings were common, as the created world and real-life (people and everyday activities) were understood to have meaning as part of God's created order.<sup>182</sup>

For example, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) was an artist whose work reflected the worldview of the Reformation. Schaeffer explains:

Rembrandt's biblical base enabled him to excel in painting people with psychological depth. Man was great, but man was also cruel and broken, for he had revolted against God. Rembrandt's painting was thus lofty, yet down to earth...Nature to this Dutch Reformation artist was a thing to be enjoyed as a creation of God.<sup>183</sup>

Rembrandt painted biblical scenes with great skill and also with great theological insight. In his *Raising of the Cross* (1633), amongst the Roman soldiers who are in the process of raising the cross bearing Jesus, Rembrandt includes a man in a painter's beret. It is a self-portrait of Rembrandt, and a statement of his understanding that it was his sin that nailed Christ to the cross. In *The Raising of Lazarus*, Rembrandt paints Jesus in the act of bringing Lazarus back from the

---

<sup>181</sup> Dyrness, 54; Miles; 104-105; Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 89-90.

<sup>182</sup> Dyrness, 55-57; Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 99-100.

<sup>183</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 98.

dead. In this rather dark painting, the light is focused not upon Jesus, nor upon Lazarus, but upon the amazed reactions on the faces of the people looking on. As Dyrness points out, Rembrandt's seems to be asking the viewer, what do you think about this Jesus?<sup>184</sup> Rembrandt also painted scenes from daily life, such as his painting of his wife, *Danae*, which demonstrates that Christ is Lord of all of life, even of marriage.<sup>185</sup>

Another Reformation painter, Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29-1682), demonstrates that even a landscape painting can have deep theological meaning. In his *Three Trees in a Mountainous Landscape with a River*, the casual viewer will see only a picturesque landscape. The careful viewer will perhaps notice that the central tree is broken and gnarled, but is illumined with bright light even though it is obviously evening. He may also notice that the house that seems to be the destination of the workers returning from their daily toil is falling into ruin. John Walford suggests that van Ruisdael is trying to show that the present world is fallen and broken, but that there is hope in the cross of Christ.<sup>186</sup> Of course neither Rembrandt nor van Ruisdael painted for a worship or devotional purpose, but their solid Reformed theology comes through clearly nonetheless.

Following the Calvinist stream of the Reformation to America one finds a continued emphasis upon the Word, but almost none upon Christian visual arts. In fact, there was almost no visual art at all in Puritan America in the seventeenth century. After 1700, however, a tradition of painting emerged that resembled the

---

<sup>184</sup> Dyrness, 55-56.

<sup>185</sup> Schaeffer, *How Shall We Now Then Live?*, 98-104.

<sup>186</sup> Dyrness, 56-57.

Dutch paintings of the previous century, but that provided little reflection of the spiritual life of the Puritan community. Dyrness states:

...art was seen as having little or no particular theological content; it certainly had no relationship to the worshipping life of the church. This clearly had something to do with the thoroughly personal patterns of worship and spirituality that had developed by this time—and that had been especially encouraged by the pietist movements of the Old World and the revivals in the New.<sup>187</sup>

Christians in America did, though, develop their own artistic presence in the nineteenth century. The American Tract society began to include illustrations in its publication in much the same manner that Luther had done centuries before. This turned out to be a controversial development and questions were asked as to whether such pictures might not water down the message or trivialize the Gospel.<sup>188</sup>

The life of American engraver E.G. Dannel (fl. 1847) provides an interesting illustration. He produced a beautiful print entitled, *The Blessing*. This picture presents a Christian family in solemn prayer before a meal. Such portrayals of “personal and inward spirituality” were common in the nineteenth century. Shortly after producing this wonderful picture, however, Dannel quit art and went into the ministry, which was considered a real Christian vocation.<sup>189</sup>

The Fundamentalist-Liberal/Modernist conflict in the early part of the twentieth century pushed evangelical Christians away from involvement in such aspects of culture as the visual arts, as these were seen to be corrupting influences. Rather than engaging culture and entering into the marketplace of

---

<sup>187</sup> Dyrness, 59.

<sup>188</sup> Dyrness, 59-61.

<sup>189</sup> Dyrness, 61.

ideas, Bible-believing Christians withdrew into isolation. Fear of higher education (and its accompanying secular humanist propagandizing) limited the cultural and theological expression the evangelical stream could make in modern society. Much like in early America, the visual arts were not deemed to be a relevant or necessary area in which faith could be expressed.<sup>190</sup>

Having now examined both the promise that recent research indicates visual images have for improving communication and the history of their use by the church, the next chapter will discuss the theological problems and implications that incorporating visual images into the teaching and preaching ministry of the church entail.

---

<sup>190</sup> Dyrness, 62.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research project measured the comparative advantages and disadvantages of including either a multimedia presentation or a still slide presentation along with a traditional verbal teaching. If pragmatic concerns were all that mattered then the research data would be the only important consideration. However, incorporating these visual elements into the methodology of preaching and teaching entails many substantive theological concerns that should be considered before such elements are employed. Of course no theological reflection is ever done in a vacuum. All such thinking is heavily influenced by biblical concerns, the arguments of Christian theologians of past centuries, and by the contemporary cultural context.

The previous chapter covered the research, which seems to promise that there are positive results to be gained by incorporating images (that is, visual communication) into the church's ministry. It also covered the long history of the church's experience embracing or rejecting images. Given the varied and contentious history of image usage by the church it is not surprising that many theological concerns have been raised in recent years regarding using modern video projection technology to supplement the preaching and teaching ministry of the church. Additionally, this research project utilized a teaching message that allowed middle school students to see a metaphorical representation of God in

the characters displayed within the slide and multimedia presentations, which raises some additional theological questions and possible concerns.

This section attempts to identify and discuss some of the important theological issues surrounding the incorporation of such visual elements into the preaching and teaching ministry of the church and to humbly suggest a way forward in their usage. The areas to be discussed include the proper contextualization of the Gospel message, the requirements and prohibitions of the Second Commandment, the alleged primacy of the word in preaching, and the proper Christian response to new technologies.

### ***The Contextualization of the Gospel and Christian Doctrines***

#### *The Problem*

The French philosopher Voltaire said, “If you would speak to me, you must first learn my language.”<sup>1</sup> The contextualization of the Gospel and of Christian doctrines, in order to “speak the language” of current times and culture in a way that will be understood, is a challenge every generation of Christians must face. First, the essential doctrines of the Scripture must be decontextualized (since they were expressed in a contextualized way, such as in the cultural language of first century Palestine in the case of the Gospels) and then recontextualized. This recontextualization must not only present the message in a way that fits and is understandable in the contemporary era, but also is appropriate for the particular culture. The needs, questions, and cultural nuances of 21<sup>st</sup> century America, for example, are quite different from those of 21<sup>st</sup> century Brazil.

---

<sup>1</sup> Len Wilson, *The Wired Church: Making Media Ministry*, (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 1999), 9.

Additionally, the needs and abilities of the specific target audience (perhaps varying from seminary students to children) to deal with abstract and complex subjects must be considered.<sup>2</sup>

This process is very similar, if not identical, to the task that missionaries undertake when they prepare to take the Gospel into other cultures. John Stott describes contextualization this way:

The problem facing every cross-cultural messenger of the Gospel can be simply stated. It is this: "How can I, who was born and brought up in one culture, take truth out of the Bible which was addressed to people in a second culture, and communicate it to people who belong to a third culture, without either falsifying the message or rendering it unintelligible?"... "Gospel and Culture" is not a topic of purely academic interest. On the contrary, it is the burning practical concern of every missionary, every preacher, every Christian witness. For it is literally impossible to evangelize in a cultural vacuum. Nobody can reduce the biblical Gospel to a few culture-free axioms which are universally intelligible. This is because the mind-set of all human beings has been formed by the culture in which they have been brought up.<sup>3</sup>

Stott succinctly points out that it is impossible to express the Christian faith without using some form of cultural expression. This is because God created man as a cultural being so that he is unable to exist or express himself apart from culture. For man to do so he would have to deny his mannishness. Further, God is the author of not just culture but of cultural diversity. One of the results of this diversity is that ideas and beliefs cannot be freely shared from one group to another unless they share common cultural assumptions. This forces the

---

<sup>2</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 75.

<sup>3</sup> John R. W. Stott and Robert T. Coote, eds., *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture: The Papers of the Lausanne Consultation on Gospel and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), vii, quoted in Peter J. Grant, "The Tension Between Biblical Purity and Cultural Relevance in Seeker Churches." D.Min. Thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1999.

preacher to “exegete” both himself and his target audience in order to understand how to communicate the Gospel message.<sup>4</sup>

Defining the term *culture*, as it is being used in this discussion, is difficult to do comprehensively because it is tremendously complex and multifaceted. Marva Dawn defines culture as, “Every aspect of life that is produced by human beings (as opposed to what is given in creation).”<sup>5</sup> Andy Crouch similarly states that, “Culture is what human beings make of the world.”<sup>6</sup> By this he means both how man understands the world through his interaction with others and what he makes out of the elements of the world. As such culture is an all-encompassing and cumulative process. Each invention or innovation becomes a part of and influencer of culture. Culture is based upon a provisional understanding of the world and upon a vision of how the world ought to be. It encompasses language, artistic expression, technology, government, etiquette, and thought forms. It can vary between and within ethnic groups, generations, geographical population, and socio-economic status. Culture is also fundamentally a religious enterprise as it deals with transcendent issues.<sup>7</sup> Wade Clark Roof writes:

Culture has to do with making sense out of life and formulating strategies for action; and the ideas and symbols that people draw on in these fundamental undertakings are, implicitly if not explicitly, saturated with religious meaning. Religion is itself a set of cultural symbols.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Gary A. Parrett of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry lecture on January 21 and 27, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for this Urgent Time* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Andy Crouch, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry lecture on January 19, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Andy Crouch, lecture.

<sup>8</sup> Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 5, as quoted in Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out*, 18.

Of particular interest to this project is the changing culture of American youth. This new century brings rapidly progressing technological innovation and changing paradigms of thought. The evolution from modernity to post-modernity raises new challenges for the youth minister who seeks to present the Gospel to American adolescents.<sup>9</sup> The question to be examined is, how should youth ministry in particular, and the broader church in general (there is no substantive difference in the application of the argument), recontextualize its message to fit a post-modern culture? Should the ministries change their method, the content of their message, or both?

Leonard Sweet and his co-authors offer four possible categories of approach to address these questions (see Figure 2).<sup>10</sup> One way, they suggest, is to choose not to try to adapt to the changing culture and to stick with the traditions that have been handed down for generations. This entails a low change in message and a low change in method (Quadrant C). The Greek Orthodox Church would be an excellent example of this response.<sup>11</sup> The polar opposite response is to be willing to radically change both the essential content of the message and the method in which it is delivered to make it palatable to the intended audience (Quadrant B). Quadrant A represents what might be termed the Bultmannian approach. This response maintains a traditional method, but is willing to alter the message to reach the “cultured despisers” of the current era.

---

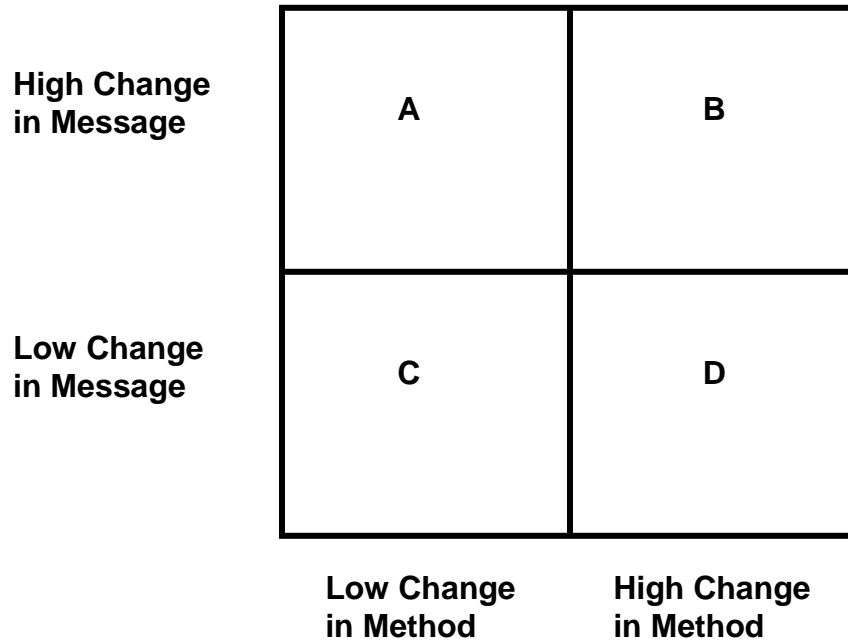
<sup>9</sup> For an excellent primer on post-modernism, see Gene Edward Veith, *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Leonard Sweet, ed., *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 19.

<sup>11</sup> In a published survey, 100% of the Orthodox churches surveyed do not use computer or video technology in their worship. See Quentin J. Schultze, *High-Tech Worship: Using Presentational Technology Wisely* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 106.

Lastly, Quadrant D calls for a willingness to alter the traditional methods of communicating, but tries not to alter the essential message of the Gospel.<sup>12</sup>

Megachurches built on the Willowcreek model (and many evangelical churches in general) are good examples of this approach.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 2. Potential Responses to Changing Culture.**<sup>14</sup>

In this discussion, Quadrants A and B will be dismissed out of hand as it is here presupposed that the unchangeable essential truths of the Gospel must remain as clear and unaltered as possible. This limits the discussion to whether it is permissible and advisable to alter the traditional methods of preaching and

---

<sup>12</sup> Not changing their message is their stated intent. See Grant, 29. Some critics claim that Willowcreek type churches inadvertently have altered the Gospel message when they altered their method.

<sup>13</sup> In a published survey, 66% of evangelical churches surveyed use computer technology and 63% use video technology in their worship. See Schultze, 106.

<sup>14</sup> Concept from Sweet, *Church in Emerging Culture*, 19.

teaching in order to more effectively communicate in a changing cultural setting. Stated more specifically, the argument becomes whether is it permissible and advisable to utilize visual technology to enhance communication in preaching and teaching.

### *The Low Change in Method Response*

Many Christian writers do not support the need to recontextualize Christian teaching. They argue that a modification of the traditional method may result in an unintentional change in the essential message. Further, if Marshall McLuhan's often quoted maxim, "The medium is the message," is correct then utilizing a visual medium will indeed affect the message.<sup>15</sup> To be sure, any recontextualization will necessarily affect the message somewhat, even if only limitedly. Translating the Bible (translation is a type of contextualization) from its original languages into English, for example, forces translators to make word choices that could have an affect upon the reader's understanding of the text. Preaching in a manner that children will understand during a children's sermon will necessarily simplify the message, and force it to be expressed in more concrete terms. The effects of these contextualization examples upon the message is, however, relatively small. Those arguing against attempting more substantive recontextualization, such as incorporating new technologies into the biblical exposition, believe that these changes will lead to much larger negative effects upon the message.

---

<sup>15</sup> Marshall McLuhan as quoted in John R. W. Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, I Believe series, ed. Michael Green, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 65.

Os Guinness sounds such a warning saying that contextualizing the Gospel message can lead to compromising it. He writes:

Scripture and History are also clear: Without maintaining critical tension, the principle of identification is a recipe for compromise and capitulation. It is no accident that the charge of being “all things to all people” has become a popular synonym for compromise. If the process of becoming “all things to all people” is to remain faithful to Christ, it has to climax in clear persuasion and profound conversion. Joining people where they are is the first step in the process, not the last.<sup>16</sup>

By identification Guinness means relevance and contextualization. His insistence upon maintaining a tension between the need to be relevant to the target audience and the need to remain biblically faithful must be remembered. He concludes, “Carelessly handled, innovation and adaptation become a form of corruption, capitulation, and idolatry.”<sup>17</sup> While this is a result that most Christian communicators would like to avoid, Guinness postulates that many preachers have already inadvertently stumbled upon it in their attempt to adapt their message to speak to modernity and postmodernity. By embracing change without reflecting theologically upon its potential result they have become addicted to accommodation without any clear guidance as to where to establish limits.

While Guinness speaks of the tension between relevance and capitulation in regard to adaptation, some writers challenge the need for any adaptation in order to be relevant. Gregory Reynolds postulates that the preacher need not do anything to attempt to make the Scripture relevant to a given cultural situation

---

<sup>16</sup> Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), 28.

<sup>17</sup> Guinness, 29.



because it is by its very nature as God's word relevant to all humanity. He criticizes any attempt to make the text relevant as creating the impression that the meaning of the text is culturally determined, and therefore, dynamic.<sup>18</sup> His argument is built upon the ideas of Cornelius Trimp who wrote:

The historic distance between our time and the days of the apostles and prophets is therefore not bridged by our human work of re-presentation, but by the faithfulness of God Himself...We do not draw old stories towards ourselves, but in the garb of the old stories God approaches us across the centuries and countries, and the Christ of Scriptures desires to dwell in our midst...*Christ is relevant*—the same Christ in whom God at one time expressed Himself totally and about whom the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments testify. No relevance can ever surpass this relevance...This relevance breaks through the myopia of modern man, the shortsightedness of the Minister of the Word, and through the narrow scope of human demands for relevance...All relevance which is not at the same time a preaching of the Christ of Scripture, is psuedo-relevance and falls below the mark of the Minister of the Word.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, if this argument is followed, no effort should be made to adapt the presentation of the Christian message to an ever-changing culture, but rather the traditionally presented unchanging message of the Scriptures will find a home in any cultural setting. Simone Weil's terse saying sums up this thought succinctly, "To be always relevant, you have to say things which are eternal."<sup>20</sup>

A step further from rejecting any attempt at relevance is the view that celebrates irrelevance. Some writers advise the church to celebrate its distinction from the world rather than to attempt to conform to the world. Marva Dawn points to Jesus' admonition for His disciples to be in the world but not of

---

<sup>18</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 375.

<sup>19</sup> Cornelius Trimp, "The Relevance of Preaching," *Westminster Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (fall, 1973): 25-29, as quoted in Reynolds, 376.

<sup>20</sup> As quoted in Guinness, 63.

the world (John 17:6-18). She believes that by imitating the world, by utilizing its methods and forms, the church becomes more “of the world” than it should. It should instead embrace its difference from the world. She writes:

It is urgent that Christians understand more clearly their position in this present culture as a minority, an alternative society. Like the earliest Christians, we want to be a people formed not by the ethos of the world around us but by the narratives of the Scriptures and by the community of believers.<sup>21</sup>

Reynolds proposes the same idea saying, “Let me suggest that the church, both as a Biblically ordered institution and as the living body of Christ, and the means of grace constitute the counter-environment and the counterblast, which God has prepared for His people.”<sup>22</sup> David Wells adds, “The fact is that when the church is authentic, when it is true to its nature as a possession of God, its cultural irrelevance becomes a very real virtue.”<sup>23</sup> As such the church ought not to employ innovations such as visual media in its preaching and teaching ministry as this smacks of worldliness and compromises and abandons its true nature. Reynolds sums up saying, “Thus, the use of electronic communication media, especially in public worship, represents a potential threat to the church’s very identity.”<sup>24</sup>

A common criticism of those Christian leaders who have embraced innovative methods (often found in the Church Growth Movement, or in evangelical megachurches) is that they have done so less for God than for pragmatism. That is to say that in order to fill pews and offering plates they have

---

<sup>21</sup> Dawn, *Reaching Out*, 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> Reynolds, 299.

<sup>23</sup> David Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 224.

<sup>24</sup> Reynolds, 299.

carelessly embraced the methods of the world without considering the baggage those methods carry. Wells observes, “All too often evangelicals have come to view modernity as value-neutral. They have coopted the techniques that have made the modern world flourish and put them to work in the evangelical world in hopes of making it flourish, too.”<sup>25</sup> Os Guinness quotes a church growth proponent who actually said, “I don’t deal with theology. I’m simply a methodologist.” After pointing out that this attitude is too prevalent, Guinness sums up saying,

Today theology is rarely more than marginal in the church-growth movement at the popular level. Discussion of the traditional marks of the church is virtually nonexistent. Instead, methodology is at the center and in control. The result is a methodology only occasionally in search of a theology.<sup>26</sup>

Following the path of pragmatism without first considering where that path will ultimately lead certainly has the potential to lead the traveler into undesirable territories.

A similar criticism leveled at those ministries that utilize new forms and methods is that they are simply pandering to the whims of the overly acculturated people. The very fact that certain innovations are popular causes Marva Dawn to question their validity. She writes, “Shouldn’t we look more closely at something that is “popular” to ask if it is being faithful?”<sup>27</sup> Further, she complains that rather than calling the people to come up to the intellectual and cultural sophistication of

---

<sup>25</sup> David Wells, *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 296.

<sup>26</sup> Guinness, 26.

<sup>27</sup> Dawn, *Reaching Out*, 167.

the traditional church the innovators are “dumbing down” the church such that the church will no longer be capable of forming Christian character in its people.<sup>28</sup>

Many of these innovative practices (such as using visual technology) are considered to be merely entertainments that feed the people’s consumerist attitudes. Such “distracting frivolities of the world”, it is said, will not equip the people with what they really need for life “in vital union with God.”<sup>29</sup> Reynolds writes in the same vein instructing the congregant on the proper expectation for the church service:

As a Christian you must never expect entertainment in worship or from the preacher. The proper mode of worship is the holy presence of our Lord. The committed hearer will look for substantive exposition of the Word of God. Exposition, not entertainment, is the mode of the preacher.<sup>30</sup>

As a countermeasure against changing traditional methods in order to be more accessible to the culture, some writers suggest educating the people to bring them up to a level that will enable them to participate in traditional church culture. Marva Dawn makes the analogy that we don’t allow children to eat or do just what they want, as they will usually choose candy and make other bad choices. Similarly, in the church the people should be given what those with sound judgment know that the people need, not what they want. For example, though the majority of congregants may enjoy and opt for contemporary praise music, they should be taught to read music and to appreciate the traditional

---

<sup>28</sup> Dawn, *Reaching Out*, 7-10.

<sup>29</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Is It a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church’s Children* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 188.

<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, 347.

hymns of the church, as these will be better for them.<sup>31</sup> Though she makes these comments specifically regarding music, the argument is applicable to many other contexts. Reynolds does just that and applies this line of reasoning to visual media. He challenges preachers not to yield to the temptation to use the electronic media that people are accustomed to but rather to “teach them how to be better worshippers and sermon listeners...We must break through, rather than imitate or accommodate, the electronic media.”<sup>32</sup>

### *The High Change in Method Response*

As there are those who believe that it is wrong for the church to adopt new presentational methods, there are also those who sincerely believe that it would be wrong for the church not to do so. They argue that to remain faithful to God’s call to make disciples the church must communicate in such a way as to be received and understood by the people of the day. In the third century AD, Origen wrote that Christians are free to “plunder the Egyptians.”<sup>33</sup> By this he referred to the event of the Exodus (Ex. 12:36) and meant that they could appropriate that which was valuable and helpful from the culture. The “high change in method” supporters argue that it is permissible and advisable to borrow what is valuable for communication from the culture.

High change in method proponents also propose that the methods of preaching and teaching that their critics claim as the ‘sacred tradition’ are nothing more than the styles and forms with which their critics happen to be comfortable.

---

<sup>31</sup> Dawn, *Reaching Out*, 165-170.

<sup>32</sup> Reynolds, 395.

<sup>33</sup> Guinness, 31.

They say that the styles and practices that their critics embrace as the “passed down traditions” are really just the innovations of yesterday. Tradition does not extend merely a century back. There is, of course, nothing done in the American church (or in a church anywhere in the world) that is exactly the same as the Apostle Peter would have done it. All has changed somewhat with time and culture. Quentin Schultze says that, “History shows that nearly all worship is a combination of continuity and innovation.”<sup>34</sup> Even the earliest Christians borrowed worship and preaching patterns from their Hebrew culture, and added innovations to fit their needs. The church’s history since that time has reflected this pattern of building upon its immediate received tradition by modifying it to fit their cultural milieu.

Len Wilson and Jason Moore explain the need for change and give several reasons why many people in the church reject methodological change.

They write:

Churched people don’t start out as stasists. They simply find expressions for their faith in a particular culture, or time and place. Not challenged to move beyond that culture, they over time confuse their experience of Jesus with the cultural context of that experience. Eventually, they come to believe that certain songs or ways of worship are more sacred than others are, and that to change them would be sacrilege...Change is inevitable. What we must do as followers of the great change agent, Jesus, is to struggle in the wake of change and find how we reconcile our core, unchanging beliefs with the constantly changing cultural forms of the world. The lazy or comfortable nature in each of us cannot blame critics of digital age worship. It would be a lot easier to go back to the good old days of doing religion. Established models require less work in any field of society or personal protocol. But that is not what we are taught active faith is about.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Schultze, 100.

<sup>35</sup> Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship* (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 2002), 161-162.

One clear implication of this argument is that the call to maintain a more biblically faithful tradition might have less to do with biblical faithfulness than it does with the comfort, convenience, and fears of the critics. The method of preaching, structure of argument, music, language, and liturgy has never been fixed and static throughout time, nor has it been universally monolithic in any given time. There has always been great disparity between church traditions and geographical locations. To choose the practices of one period of time, from one tradition, and claim that they are the *tried and true* tradition is disingenuous. One could put forth an argument as to why such practices are superior to others and ought to be employed, but one cannot claim that those specific traditions are the biblical traditions of Christ's church.

There is a considerable argument to be made that the Scripture itself provides examples of faithful believers recontextualizing their message to meet the needs of their changing cultural settings. If it can be demonstrated that this is so, then the principle of propriety will be established. In that case, those contemporary Christians who think that some recontextualization of their message would be beneficial can be confident that they are on solid ground.

One example that can be examined is the actions of Ezra and Nehemiah. The eighth chapter of the book of Nehemiah describes how Nehemiah, after completing the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, constructed a wooden platform in the square by the Water Gate and assembled the people. From atop the platform Ezra the priest read the Book of the Law of Moses to them. Many of the people had recently returned from exile in Babylon (where Aramaic was the

spoken language) and did not understand Hebrew well enough to grasp the meaning of the words being read. Therefore they had the Levites translate the Law into Aramaic and explain the meaning so that the masses could understand it. The result was that the people, now being able to understand the Law, were moved to tears. This is an example of recontextualizing the message to fit a changing cultural setting, and of the result that can follow when the eternal truths of God are communicated in a way that the people can understand.

The practices of the Apostle Paul serves as an excellent example since his ministry required him to speak to Jewish, Greek, and Roman audiences across the Roman Empire. His experience as a traveling evangelist and church planter provided Paul with insights regarding the need for properly contextualizing the Gospel when one moves from one culture to another, and the stumbling blocks that arise if this is not done. Paul records that he went to great lengths to avoid allowing inconsequential factors to get into the way of people hearing and considering his teaching. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 he states:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law). To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.<sup>36</sup>

Of course when he said, "I have become all things to all men" he did not mean, as the commonly used phrase implies today, that he compromised his values or his message. Rather Paul meant that he was willing to become like his

---

<sup>36</sup> 1 Cor. 9:19-22.



audience, to enter into their cultural environment, and to speak to them on their terms so that he would be better understood. Paul intended to present his teaching in a way that would be comprehended by the recipients. He stated as much to the Corinthians writing, “For we do not write you anything that you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully....”<sup>37</sup> The message of the cross might be considered scandalous, but that message is to be understood.

One way that Paul attempted to improve his communication was to vary his method of presentation and argument according to the nature of his audience. When in Pisidian Antioch, Paul was invited to speak to the Jews assembled in the synagogue on the Sabbath (see Acts 13:13-41). At the appropriate time in the worship service (when a visiting Rabbi would be invited to speak) Paul delivered a very appropriate, culturally Jewish message to Jewish people. He built his argument on the history of Israel, identified himself as one of them using the pronoun “we”, referred to the Torah, and presented Jesus as the expected Messiah, which was a thoroughly Jewish concept. This was a Jewish presentation in both form and content.

In great contrast to his method of speaking in Pisidian Antioch was Paul’s speech in Athens (see Acts 17:16-34). Here Paul presented a reasoned, linear, logical argument as was culturally appropriate in speaking to a group of Greek philosophers steeped in Aristotelian rhetoric. He spoke on Mars Hill before a meeting of the Areopagus, which was the appropriate place and time for such a presentation in that culture. His argument did not resemble that given to the

---

<sup>37</sup> 2 Cor. 1:13a.

Jewish audience at all. Instead of beginning with a recitation of the history of Israel, Paul began by connecting with a bit of Athenian culture. Faced with the problem of trying to introduce another “god” (a monotheistic God at that) into a polytheistic culture already glutted with them, he referred to an existing altar he had seen in the city inscribed with the words, “*agnosto theo*.” This was the inscription placed on certain altars set up in Athens after Epimenedes, a Cretan hero, delivered the city from plague by sacrificing to a powerful god that he and the Athenians did not know. Paul picked up on the history of this altar—an object that was in the culture but not of the culture and had no associated idol—and used it to explain to the Athenians who this God really is. He reached further into the Greek cultural bag and used the term *theos*, which was a general term for deity but was also the term used by the philosophers Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophanes to refer to the one, supreme God in their writings. Paul exposed the logical flaws in their system of idolatry, quoted from poems by Epimenedes and another Greek writer, Aratus, and then tried to bring them to repentance and belief in Christ.<sup>38</sup> He clearly adapted his address in content and thought form to fit the cultural setting in which he was speaking.

Additionally, Paul faced great criticism for not insisting that his Gentile converts live according to Jewish customs and laws. Many early believers, who were, of course, Jews, insisted that the Gentiles do so (see Acts 15). Paul, however, exegeted the essence of the faith out of its original Jewish context and was able to recontextualize it in an appropriate way for the Gentiles. He

---

<sup>38</sup> Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, Revised ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 16-25; Frank Gaebeline, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, *The Acts of the Apostles*, by Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 476-477.

understood that the requirements that his Judaizing critics claimed were essential for the Gentiles to follow were really extraneous cultural baggage in regard to the true message of salvation through faith. Therefore, he jettisoned them when speaking to the Gentiles. He even took Peter to task for not thoroughly recontextualizing the faith in Galatia saying to Peter, “How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”<sup>39</sup> However, when Paul was ministering in Jewish contexts, his method was to operate under the law (1 Cor. 9:20). He varied his methodology according to his context of ministry.

Lastly, examining the teaching ministry of Jesus serves to demonstrate that He felt free to break from the traditional form of Jewish religious teaching and to speak to the people in new ways so as to better communicate God’s truth to them. Matthew 7:28b-29 states that “the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.” The Greek word used here for teaching, *didache*, can “refer to both content and manner, and no doubt the crowds were astonished at both.”<sup>40</sup> One difference in teaching method that the crowds would have noticed immediately is that Jesus broke with the traditional form of rabbinical presentation. Teachers of the law at that time would memorize the received tradition and then recite the teachings of various rabbis to illustrate possible interpretations of a text.<sup>41</sup> Such a teaching would, of course, be dependant upon the authority of others, but it would also be primarily ratiocinative and word based. Jesus often taught in

---

<sup>39</sup> Gal. 2:14.

<sup>40</sup> Frank Gaebelin, ed. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, *Matthew*, by D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 195.

<sup>41</sup> Gaebelin, *Matthew*, 195.

parables, which are metaphorical and story based. They create a mental picture in the mind of the listener. They are not illustrative of the point, “they are the point.”<sup>42</sup> Storytelling as a method of rabbinical teaching was innovative and very compelling for the listeners. Jesus recontextualized God’s message to his people in a way that communicated persuasively to them.

Len Wilson offers an illustrative example of what can happen when one party refuses to try to connect with its target audience. In the early days of the personal computer market Apple Computer had the best product. It lost out, however, to IBM, which grabbed the vast majority of the market. Wilson explains why this happened:

Macintosh had the best interface. It had the best graphics. It led the desktop publishing revolution. It was more “user-friendly” out of the box. But because it refused to be “compatible” with other computer companies, because they refused to “dumb down” their operating system, Mac lost out to Big Blue, which encouraged a variety of “IBM-compatibles.”<sup>43</sup>

What happened was that Macintosh pursued the traditional corporate strategy of protecting its trade secrets and operating system and tried to win a dominant position in the market on its own. IBM pursued the opposite approach of licensing its operating system to any competitor who would like to use it, and collected a royalty on every machine that was manufactured. The inexpensive IBM clones flooded the market and were snapped up by price-conscious consumers. IBM’s profits soared while Apple was pushed to the brink. Wilson’s point is to ask if it possible that the same thing could happen to the church even though it has the best message. Could Americans really miss out on the Gospel

---

<sup>42</sup> Raymond Bailey, *Jesus the Preacher* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 37.

<sup>43</sup> Len Wilson, *Wired Church*, 9.

of hope and embrace some ersatz just because it is presented in a way that they more easily grasp? He suggests that the church should innovate and adapt in order to better communicate.

Francis Schaeffer challenges the notion that there is such a thing as a fixed, godly style in anything (including preaching). Styles in everything have changed. Not to change, he says, is to die. He details how styles of art have changed over the centuries and claims that there is nothing wrong with this. A Christian painter, he asserts, is not more Christian the more he paints like Rembrandt. Nor is a man godlier if he prays in King James English instead of in contemporary vernacular. Poetry can be glorifying to God even if it is of a modern form and does not use the Hebrew form of parallelism and alliteration, and music just as sacred even if it is not played on an organ.<sup>44</sup> By extension, it can be said that there is no such thing as the godly style of preaching or teaching. Change is acceptable and can be good.

One such change, Len Wilson suggests, is to follow Jesus' example and move away from strictly logical, linear presentation methods and towards an increased use of metaphorical communication. Using story to communicate can lead people to discover truth that they might not be willing to listen to in a lecture format. Stories can touch the emotions, are memorable, and are entertaining. Visual media is most effective at presenting narrative. Its use to tell story can engage multiple senses and "add multiple dimensions of depth to the process of telling a story."<sup>45</sup> This is not a call to "dumb down" the preaching or teaching of

---

<sup>44</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 49-54.

<sup>45</sup> Len Wilson, *Wired Church*, 25.

the church (unless one suggests that Jesus “dumbed down” the Old Testament), but rather to present complex and abstract concepts in a new way. A way that is more directly accessible to a culture that is fluent in visual media.

Even John Stott, a man that no one would ever accuse of compromising the Gospel, believes that the digital age in which we live “challenges preachers to make our presentation of the truth attractive through variety, colour, illustration, humour and fast-flowing movement...although nothing can supplant preaching, it definitely needs to be supplemented.”<sup>46</sup> He explains what some of the means are that he thinks might be usefully employed to supplement the preaching of the word (as they existed in the year in which he wrote, 1982), saying:

Some preachers use either blackboard or overhead projector to great effect, while others use film or slides, and soon video-cassettes will be readily available. Brief dramatic presentations, which illustrate some truth of lesson or sermon, can make a powerful impact...When drama, dance, and dialogue are combined, one might almost refer to a ‘3-D worship’.<sup>47</sup>

Validating this proposal to utilize visual media to communicate more effectively is Leonard Sweet’s personal experience. It has already been stated that visual media dominate contemporary times and that people are very conversant with, open to, and even expectant of this form of communication. Sweet tells a story that illustrates this. He writes:

I was in the midst of an address to a youth convention, and it was not going well. Even when I moved to more karaoke style of presentation and walked the audience while engaging them in dialogue, my feet felt like they were slogging through a quagmire. Just when the sacrament-of-failure started kicking in...an orange-haired member of the audience chimed in, “Sweet, don’t you have this on video?”

---

<sup>46</sup> John Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, 76.

<sup>47</sup> John Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, 78.

“Yes I do....Would you like to see it?” A giant sigh of relief rose from the congregation...As I unzipped the leather case to pull out the video, I thought to myself—*But you have me! Why do you want a video when you have me?*—but I gave the video to the minister of sound at the mixing table, sat down, and for the next ten minutes watched myself on screen.

When the lights went on and I stood back up, I faced an entirely different audience. The energy in the place was electrifying...For the next 30 minutes I surfed their spirit, surfed God’s Spirit, and the waves of excitement and engagement gushed out of that room like the breaking of a big kahuna.

What happened? What made the difference? I had been legitimated by the screen...For natives, many of whom have graphicacy skills before they have literacy skills, the screen is what credentializes you. If you can’t speak to them in their native tongue, they won’t really listen to you.<sup>48</sup>

This story illustrates what its proponents claim is the power of visual media to capture the attention of postmodern culture and to communicate with it. If Sweet (a professor of evangelism at Drew University) had stuck with a traditional method of preaching one might ask if as many kids would have accepted Christ or grown deeper in their faith, and, if less, what justification could he give for not employing the effective tools at his disposal?

What of the argument that if the church uses tools of the world to communicate with the world it is really just compromising its values and becoming worldly? To this Rick Warren answers that there is a vast distinction between using those tools of the culture that really don’t have a negative spiritual effect and being “of the world.” He also points out that Jesus wanted His disciples “in the world” and not removed from it by some artificial man-made separation. He writes:

---

<sup>48</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 50; Natives is Sweet’s term for people of the postmodern culture, immigrants are those from modern culture trying to speak to them.

[The “isolationist camp”] insists we must avoid *any* adaptation to culture in order to preserve the purity of the church. They fail to see the distinction between the sinful values of our culture and the nonsinful customs, styles, and preferences that each generation develops. They reject new translations of Scripture, current musical styles, and any attempt to modify man-made traditions, such as the time and order of the worship service that they are accustomed to. Isolationists sometimes have a dress code, and a list of what is permissible and what isn’t regarding issues that the Bible is silent on.<sup>49</sup>

John MacArthur is a critic of many of the attempts at recontextualizing the Gospel message to fit the needs of the changing culture. When pressed in an interview with *Leadership* magazine, however, he was forced to admit that he also accommodates the culture in all sorts of ways. His church advertises, has a sprawling and expensive facility, and an expansive and convenient parking lot. MacArthur preaches to the needs of his audience, and uses relevant illustrations to try to connect with them.<sup>50</sup> Arguments could be raised against many of MacArthur’s cultural accommodations accusing him of caving in to worldly tendencies in society. It must be observed, then, that compromise seems to be in the eye of the beholder.

It should be pointed out that even the staunchest maintainers of tradition have embraced many aspects of technological development and cultural change, even if they are not aware of it. Whereas worship services used to extend for a large part of the Sunday in eighteenth century New England, today they do not. To fit the context of a hurried and overly busy culture, the time of proclamation of God’s word, and the length of the service as a whole, has been greatly reduced

---

<sup>49</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 236.

<sup>50</sup> John MacArthur, “Our Sufficiency for Outreach: An Interview with John MacArthur About His Controversial Book,” *Leadership* 12 (Fall 1991), 134-139.



to fit into the space of about an hour on average. Printed hymnals are employed whereas in the past congregants were required to memorize the words of the hymns. Churches are centrally heated in winter and sometimes cooled in the summer, an embrace of a relatively new technology. Gregorian chants are no longer common and a more recent “classical” style of music embraced. Sound amplification is almost universally employed and the instrument that was once rejected for church use because of its “worldly character”, the organ, is now the instrument of choice in traditional churches. All of these adaptations have entailed consequences—positive, negative or both—that have spiritually affected the congregations.

Finally, the proponents of using innovative methods such as visual technology deny that doing so automatically transforms worship or preaching into entertainment. Rather they claim that these technologies increase their ability to build the spiritual character of their people by enabling them to communicate on multiple levels. The charge that innovators are turning the preaching of the Gospel into entertainment has been around at least since Billy Sunday and Aimee Semple McPherson imitated vaudeville styles as a means to gain the attention of the people of their day.<sup>51</sup> Certainly it must be admitted that if misused multimedia technology has the potential to be merely entertaining and lacking in depth. However, this need not be the case. In fact, so great is the positive potential of this media, that Wilson states, “To deny electronic media as

---

<sup>51</sup> Len Wilson, *Wired Church*, 30.

a feasible communication form now would put us among the separatist traditions that are well documented in Christian history, from the Essenes to the Amish.”<sup>52</sup>

Proponents admit that a well-done multimedia presentation does have the power to entertain, meaning to capture the attention of the audience. They point out, however, that any skilled preacher *entertains* his audience with engaging illustrations. Spurgeon, the “Prince of Preachers,” was a master at choosing riveting illustrations to underscore his points and hold the attention of his hearers. Even John MacArthur, a harsh critic of using visual technologies/multimedia was forced in an interview to admit that he tries to *entertain* his congregation with good illustrations. He defended his practice, though, by explaining that his practice was legitimate because his motivation was to communicate spiritual truth to develop and deepen his people.<sup>53</sup> Obviously this statement can be directly applied to integrating multimedia or other visual technologies into the communication process of the church.

Bill Hybels responded to criticisms that his church’s worship services (which include innovative communication methods such as multimedia) were just entertainment, saying:

The word entertainment is, of course, emotive by its nature. And yes, we do use drama, contemporary music, and multimedia presentations. But they are never used for the sake of titillation. I think it’s good to ask: Who was the master composer? Who created the arts? Whose idea was it to communicate the truth through a variety of artistic genres? I think it was God.

Then why has the church narrowed its options and selected a talking head as its only form on communicating the most important message on the planet? Even though preaching is the primary way the truth of God has been and should be communicated, we add

---

<sup>52</sup> Len Wilson, *Wired Church*, 32.

<sup>53</sup> MacArthur, 139.

texture and feeling and perspective to it through the use of music and media and drama. And anyone who has witnessed our presentations would never use the words “mere entertainment.”<sup>54</sup>

Here Hybels sums up the argument of visual media’s proponents very well. New does not mean bad and engaging does not mean mindless.

### *Conclusions*

It can be seen from the above discussion that both those who advocate changing presentational methods and those who oppose doing so have valid points and concerns. Considering both viewpoints, a way forward might be proposed—a way that seeks to embrace the positive benefits accompanying change but attempts to avoid its negative potential.

When Origen suggested that the church was free to “plunder the Egyptians,” he of course intended that she would take from the culture that which was valuable and healthy. He did not at all intend for the church to take that which was idolatrous or sinful. Of course, in the real story in Exodus (Ex. 12:36) from which Origen draws the analogy, the fleeing Israelites did take the idolatrous (Acts 7:42-43; Amos 5:25-27), both physically in the form of idols and mentally in the desire to worship them. Such is the danger for the church when she borrows from the culture. The church is free to take and employ the good, but must be wary lest she inadvertently takes the bad.

Gary Parrett points out that in every culture there are, as he puts it, “idols and isms” which must be identified. By this he means things that, though embraced and celebrated in the culture, are antithetical to the Gospel. For those

---

<sup>54</sup> Bill Hybels, “Selling Out the House of God?” quoted in Grant, 103.

having grown up in the culture, these things can be difficult to identify. On the other hand, there are also aspects in every culture that are 'in sync' with the Gospel. Anyone trying to recontextualize the Gospel message into a culture needs to identify those aspects of the culture that can be enthusiastically embraced, those that can be carefully used, those that should be challenged, and those that must be condemned. Those cultural aspects that can be embraced can be employed. Those aspects that are to be challenged or rejected ought not to be employed in the preaching of the Gospel.<sup>55</sup>

Additionally, Schaeffer points out that the Christian seeking to borrow cultural forms in order to communicate needs to use a filter of effectiveness. That is to say the method or form used to communicate must be able to effectively convey the content. Even if there is nothing inherently improper with one particular form of communication, it should not be used if its limitations get in the way of the content being clearly understood by the audience.<sup>56</sup>

Keeping the above factors in mind, the church can potentially fall into one of two opposite errors in regard to its approach to recontextualizing its message in order to connect with changing culture. On the one hand, it can unquestioningly embrace a new method because it is novel and works. On the other hand it can unthinkingly reject it because it is novel and works. Accepting without qualm and rejecting without question are both equally in error.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Gary A. Parrett of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry lecture on January 21, 2004.

<sup>56</sup> Schaeffer, *Art*, 54.

<sup>57</sup> Os Guinness, 30.

Os Guinness writes, “Relevance is a prerequisite for communication. Without it, there is no communication, only a one-sided sending of messages addressed to no one, nowhere.”<sup>58</sup> It is incumbent upon the local church to speak in a way that its contemporary culture will comprehend. Not to do so would be akin to returning to the Middle Ages during which the mass was spoken in Latin to non-Latin speakers. This is a dereliction of the duty of the church to make disciples and to teach them. The Apostle Paul certainly intended to present his teaching in a way that would be understood by his recipients. Therefore, just as Paul altered his communication methods and “plundered” various cultural aspects and methods so as to reach the various peoples within the scope of his ministry, the American church today ought to make use of the available, appropriate, and effective tools that the culture provides in order to better reach the people. The “just say no” response to change is an irresponsible course for the church to follow.

Conversely, the church must resist the temptation to modify its message to fit the culture, without qualm, just in order to be relevant. As Guinness states, “When absolutized, relevance becomes lethal to truth.” It is never appropriate to sacrifice the truth for the sake of being heard. Guinness explains, “Truth, in fact, gives relevance to “relevance,” just as “relevance” becomes irrelevance if it is not related to truth.”<sup>59</sup> Paul stated that the message of Christ crucified is “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.”<sup>60</sup> Paul had a limit to how far he would go in recontextualizing his message. He would never do anything

---

<sup>58</sup> Os Guinness, 62.

<sup>59</sup> Os Guinness, 63.

<sup>60</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23.

that would threaten the essential content of the Gospel, even if, because of this, he met rejection.

This situation results in a constant tension for the church. It is pulled between the pressure to repackage its message so as to be understood, and the danger that in doing so it might change the essential content of its teaching. This place of tension is actually a healthy place for the church to live. It is forced to constantly think about what it is doing and why it is doing it. It must continually reevaluate its methods. There is no place for dead traditions or methods that do not fulfill their function. On the other hand, there should be no alteration in methodology without hard thinking regarding theology. Changes in methods or traditions should only be made after their effects have been thoroughly thought through. They should be made intentionally, and with a definite, legitimate purpose in mind. There should also be constant evaluation to determine if the changes that were introduced created unanticipated negative consequences, and adjustments made.

Incorporating visual technologies into the preaching and teaching ministry of the church requires this kind of theological reflection. In our American culture, technology can be considered to be an idol. There are those who look to technology to provide solutions for all of their problems as if it were an omnipotent god. Others embrace and apply every new innovation in a way that resembles an addiction. It is suggested here that using visual technologies has great potential to enhance communication, but that their use must be considered thoughtfully.

First, the technology must be made subservient to the message and not the other way around. That is to say that the question that must be asked before a visual presentation is used is, will this visual presentation improve the point of the teaching? No matter how impressive, relevant, or entertaining the video is, if it does not strengthen the message, it is not appropriate to use it. It should be the slave and not the master of the preacher.

Secondly, the use of visual technologies should be thoughtfully blended into the existing traditions and methods of the church to create a seamless tapestry of communication. There should be a holistic plan for the service or meeting so that the technology use meshes and synchronizes with everything else the church is doing. A visual presentation should not be distracting or call attention to itself. It should fulfill the function to which it was intended to serve and not be a self-serving end. The screen should not be allowed to become an idol that dominates the church's architecture, but should be thoughtfully placed and not overly used. In the same way that a good sound amplification system enhances the speaker's ability to communicate without really being noticed (it is usually only noticed when it malfunctions creating a distraction), a good visual presentation enhances the speaker's message without becoming the focal point.

Thirdly, because visual images have the potential to communicate many varied messages, including those that the preacher may not have intended, they must be carefully chosen. The speaker who employs a visual image should consider if there is anything inappropriate or confusing in it. He should think about how his audience might interpret it and if it perhaps communicates a

message or assumption that he does not intend. Commercial movie clips, which are frequently used, often come from films that convey values and cultural assumptions that are antithetical to Christian truth. As such they need not be discarded necessarily, but they should be used with care. Verbal explanations or disclaimers might be in order.

In conclusion, though recontextualizing the Gospel is fraught with potential pitfalls, and great effort is required to do it well, love and concern for the lost ought to motivate the church to attempt it. Leonard Sweet tells a story from his personal experience that serves as an excellent analogy for the church's situation. He writes:

All I wanted was a soft pretzel sans butter. "Sorry, sir, we don't serve pretzels without butter," the attendant announced as she removed from the oven steaming, hot pretzels which she proceeded to dip into the butter.

"You don't understand," I explained hurriedly, as my plane was boarding its final passengers from Newark's Continental C Terminal. "Just hand me the pretzel from the oven. Don't dip it into the butter. I'll pay you the full price for it"

"Sorry, sir, we don't serve pretzels without butter."

I had no time to argue, and I was hungry. "I've had no-butter pretzels at better establishments than this all over the country. But let's not argue. This is what I'll do. Here's a \$5 bill. That's almost three for one. You keep the change. Just hand me that one pretzel there without butter. Deal?"

"No, sir, we don't serve pretzels without butter."

"Can you tell me why?"

"I can't imagine a soft pretzel without butter. I certainly wouldn't serve you one."<sup>61</sup>

In the analogy, Leonard Sweet stands for the unchurched member of contemporary culture. The pretzel is the Gospel truth that he desperately needs, while the butter is the superfluous aspects of "church culture" that keep Sweet

---

<sup>61</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World* (Nashville, TN.: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 126.



from being able to accept it. The point is clear; the church needs to give to the starving the bread from heaven that will truly satisfy them, and give it in a way that they will be able to receive it.

### ***The Proscriptions of the Second Commandment***

While contextualizing the Christian message is important, it would be improper to do so in a manner or by a method that is prohibited by God's word. This is one of the arguments that has been raised against incorporating visual technologies into the preaching and teaching ministries of the church, namely that doing so violates, or could potentially violate, the Second Commandment.<sup>62</sup>

This commandment states:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.<sup>63</sup>

As described in Chapter Two, the church has historically varied in its interpretation and application of this commandment so that at times multitudes of images have been embraced while at other times almost all images have been rejected. As this research project measured the effects of using images in preaching and teaching, and in particular used images that metaphorically

---

<sup>62</sup> Some traditions count the commandments differently than is typically done in the Reformed tradition such that the prohibition against graven images is reckoned to be part of the First Commandment.

<sup>63</sup> Ex. 20:4-6; A more literal translation would be; "You shall not make for yourself an idol or any image of that in the heavens above..." Translation mine. *Pesel* means "idol" in English and *temunah* means "image."

represented God, the question of the interpretation of the Second Commandment is most germane.

Those who would argue against using visual technologies within the church today follow a stricter interpretation of the commandment. By following a more literal translation of the text (see the note regarding the text) than that of the New International Version, and by emphasizing the prohibition against making any image, one can logically forbid the use of all images by the church. While few have advocated such a strict position, though Karlstadt's theology with its emphasis upon the Old Law came close to it, many still see in the Second Commandment enough of a warning against the abuse of images to warrant their ban.<sup>64</sup> Ulrich Zwingli, for example, rejected the Lutheran distinction between the permissible making of an image and the forbidden adoration of that image. For him, the possible abuse of images (so common in his era) invalidated their use. Further, Zwingli argued that since divinity cannot possibly be shown, no image of Christ ought to be produced.<sup>65</sup> John Calvin drew similar conclusions from the Second Commandment and wrote, "The Lord, however, not only forbids any image of himself to be erected by a statuary, but to be formed by any artist whatever, because every such image is sinful and insulting to his majesty."<sup>66</sup>

In similar fashion the Reformed tradition has maintained a strong prohibition against the use of images within the Church. The Heidelberg Catechism (completed in 1562) reads:

---

<sup>64</sup> Michalski, 54.

<sup>65</sup> Michalski, 54, 56, 59.

<sup>66</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), I, xi, 4.

Q. 96. What does God require in the second commandment?

A. That we should not represent him or worship him in any other manner than he has commanded in his word.

Q. 97. Should we, then, make no images at all?

A. God cannot and should not be pictured in any way. As for creatures, although they may indeed be portrayed, God forbids making or having any likeness of them in order to worship them, or to use them to serve him.

Q. 98. But may not pictures be tolerated in churches in place of books for unlearned people?

A. No, for we must not try to be wiser than God who does not want his people to be taught by means of lifeless idols, but through the living preaching of his word.<sup>67</sup>

The Westminster Larger Catechism (commissioned in 1643) argues similarly:

Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the Second Commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the Second Commandment are: all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any wise approving any religious worship not instituted by God himself; the making of any representation of God, of all, or any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it...<sup>68</sup>

It can be seen then that a strict application of the principles contained in these catechisms would preclude the use of visual presentations accompanying the preaching and teaching in the Church. Certainly the visual representation of God, albeit metaphorical, used in this experiment's research clearly violates the injunctions of both catechisms not to picture Him in any way.

If this is so, then how can using still slides or multimedia presentations in a Reformed, Protestant context (such as the youth conference in which this research was conducted) be justified? The answers are to be found in

---

<sup>67</sup> *The Heidelberg Catechism* (in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Part 1 Book of Confessions* [Louisville, KY, Office of the General Assembly, 1999]) Lord's Day 35.

<sup>68</sup> *The Larger Catechism* (in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Part 1 Book of Confessions* [Louisville, KY, Office of the General Assembly, 1999]) Question 109.

challenging an overly strict interpretation of the Second Commandment, and in examining the cultural context in which such a strict interpretation was constructed.

By narrowly focusing upon the first clause in Exodus 20:4, prohibiting the creation of an image, some interpreters ignore the connection to the intent of the prohibition, which is not to create an idol. As discussed in Chapter Two, the tabernacle and its successor, Solomon's Temple, contained "almost every form of representational art that men have ever known."<sup>69</sup> When all of the examples of images found in the Old Testament are considered, and most all of them were specifically prepared at the command of the Lord, it must be concluded that God does not consider the creation of images per se to be a violation of the Second Commandment. For certainly all manner of imagery was utilized in the Old Testament, excepting any representation of God. Thus one must understand the intended thrust of the Second Commandment as not to create an image so as to make an idol of it.<sup>70</sup>

An illustrative example, which will be helpful to keep in mind, comes from the pages of Scripture. In Numbers 21, Moses is instructed by God to fashion the image of a snake and place it on a pole. The Israelites had grievously sinned again by lacking faith and complaining against the Lord so that He had sent venomous snakes among them to punish them. When the people repented and

---

<sup>69</sup> Schaeffer, *Art*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Kaiser writes regarding the making of images, "None of these are to be made *with the intention to worship them*. This word was not meant to stifle artistic talent but only to avoid *improper* substitutes that, like the idols of Canaan, would steal hearts away from the true worship of God. One needs only to consider the tabernacle with its ornate appointments—all under divine instruction—to see that making representations is not absolutely forbidden." Frank Gaebelin, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, *Exodus*, by Walter C. Kaiser (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 422-423.

cried out for help, God instructed Moses to fashion the bronze image. All of the Israelites who had been bitten by the snakes and who looked (presumably in faith) upon the bronze snake were saved. From this story one can see that it was not a violation of the Second Commandment for Moses to fashion the bronze image because the image was not to be used as an idol. It might even be observed that the image was not an idol even though the people were gazing upon it as part of a faith-building lesson. However, by the time of King Hezekiah this image had become an idol to the Israelites such that they were burning incense to it. It then had to be destroyed by Hezekiah, as this practice was clearly a violation of the commandment.<sup>71</sup> Thus, it was neither the creation of the image, nor its visible use in teaching a lesson of faith to the people, but rather the adoration of the image that was sinful.

This was, of course, Luther's position on the image question as he understood that once a person truly understands and believes that he is justified by faith alone then he is free to use images if they are helpful.<sup>72</sup> That is why he did not feel constrained to avoid adding illustrations to his translation of the German Bible. Following this line of reasoning and applying it to the utilization of visual technology today, one must conclude that there is not an immediate violation of the Second Commandment when projecting still or moving images as part of the preaching and teaching ministry of the church. Using projected images to reinforce or illustrate teaching points is in no way synonymous with fostering idolatry. Further, the dynamic and ephemeral nature of projected

---

<sup>71</sup> 2Kings 18.

<sup>72</sup> Dyrness, 52.

images certainly would seem to reduce the probability of any such image becoming idolatrous.

The assertion might still be made, however, that using any representation of God, even one that is symbolic or metaphoric (such as was made in the research video), does violate the commandment. This certainly is the clear teaching of both the above-mentioned catechisms. Is this assertion reasonable?

Addressing this assertion requires breaking the argument into two separate areas. First, the easier of the two to address, is the question as to whether it is ever proper to produce an image of the incarnated Christ. Making a movie such as *The Passion* or *The Greatest Story Ever Told* requires an actor to portray Jesus. That is to say that a real face and body are presented on screen as being Jesus. Likewise, in medieval passion plays a live actor played the part of Jesus. Of course the understood implication of any biblically faithful movie or play is not that what is presented on screen or on stage is exactly how Jesus looked, dressed, or sounded, but rather that the actions portrayed are what the real Jesus did.

The fact that God saw fit to step into human history and take upon Himself the form of a man allows that event to be materially depicted. In the Incarnation is seen a material representation of deity as Christ is “the image of the invisible God.”<sup>73</sup> Since all other men can be depicted in some representational manner, it is, in a sense, a denial of the full humanity of Christ to insist that He cannot be represented visually. The Orthodox Church argues this point strenuously following the arguments of John of Damascus who stated:

---

<sup>73</sup> Col. 1:15.

When he who is bodiless and without form, immeasurable in the boundlessness of his own nature, existing in the form of God, empties himself, and is found in a body of flesh, then you may draw his image and show it to anyone willing to gaze upon it.<sup>74</sup>

Of course in portraying Christ visually the Eastern Church realizes that it is doing more than simply displaying the human part of Jesus. As the “*eikon* of the invisible God,” Christ’s divinity and humanity were inseparable so that it is impossible and incorrect to portray one without the other. Therefore, in arguing why the Orthodox Church deems it acceptable to visually portray Christ, Williams states:

If we paint a picture of Jesus, we’re not trying to show a humanity apart from divine life, but a humanity soaked through with divine life. The workings of God, the ‘energy’ of God, to use a favourite word of Eastern theologians, are all the time acting on and in the human nature of Jesus. We don’t depict just a slice of history when we depict Jesus; we show a life radiating the light and force of God. And this means also that if we know what we are doing when we represent Jesus, if we approach the whole matter in prayer and adoration, the image that is made becomes in turn something that in its own way radiates this light and force.<sup>75</sup>

Additionally, it is a very short step from the mental picture of Christ that every person cannot help but create upon reading or hearing the Gospel stories to putting that mental picture into a material medium. Claiming that there is a meaningful difference between the two is a difficult argument to make indeed. There may be reasons for which, and situations in which, it is not wise to do so, but there is certainly not a biblical prohibition against doing so. This line of argument influenced even Zwingli who decided that pictures that depicted the

---

<sup>74</sup> John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, quoted in Dyrness, 37.

<sup>75</sup> Williams, xvi.

incarnated Christ and displayed Him in historical contexts could be placed in homes.<sup>76</sup>

The second and more difficult area to address is the propriety of creating any representation of the invisible God. It would certainly be improper if an image was displayed that claimed to be a full and accurate picture of Him. What if, however, as was done in the research video, a courtroom scene depicting a judge is displayed and the analogy is drawn that God is in a way like a judge? Is this depicting God improperly or merely illustrating a valid biblical point? To find an answer to this question one can examine the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught quite a bit about what the Father is like by way of analogy and metaphor. In the story of the Prodigal Son, for example, Jesus created in the minds of His listeners (and today, readers) a vivid mental picture of a loving and forgiving father embracing his repentant son.<sup>77</sup> This story does not depict a full and complete picture of God's character, which is far too complex for humans to ever fully understand let alone to capture in one story or metaphor, but it is an accurate illustration of one aspect of His character. Of course many similar examples could be drawn from other texts of Jesus' teaching. If Jesus created such mental pictures in the minds of His listeners through His adept use of narrative, then using visual technology to depict the same points should certainly be allowed as well. Again, it is a very short step from mental image to material image with little real difference.

---

<sup>76</sup> Michalski, 56.

<sup>77</sup> Lk. 15:11-32.



Additionally, it could be argued that God has provided in the material matter of creation analogies that can serve to illustrate His character and attributes. Hardy states his support for this rationale and argues against the thought that the material can never represent the spiritual stating:

The alternative, of course, is not to suppose a lesser gap between the spiritual and the material, or to suppose that the material as such represents the spiritual, but to believe that God makes the material capable of representing God. "Since the sacred realities signified by the sacraments are spiritual things that only the mind can grasp, the sacraments must signify them with things our senses can perceive, just as the scriptures express them with analogies drawn from the perceptible world."<sup>7</sup> By extension, the same can be applied to the visual arts: images of perceptible things can provide analogies to the spiritual insofar as they are used within the faith of believers in the church.

---

<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. T. McDermott (Westminster, 1989), 54.4, 97.<sup>78</sup>

The Orthodox Church takes this argument one step further. Building upon the argument of Athanasius in his treatise, *On the Incarnation*, they postulate that at the Incarnation God renewed creation from the Fall.<sup>79</sup> Zelensky and Gilbert write, "Because Christ, the second member of the Holy Trinity, took on human flesh, the material realm has been elevated to the same level of importance as the spiritual realm."<sup>80</sup> Therefore, they reason that it is allowable and appropriate to use material means to depict the spiritual.

One need not go so far as the Orthodox argument extends, however, to allow for the use of visual symbols and representations in the church. John

---

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Hardy, "Calvinism and the Visual Arts: A Theological Introduction," in *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. Paul Corby Finey (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 5.

<sup>79</sup> Dyrness, 34.

<sup>80</sup> Zelensky, 23.

Frame, a conservative Presbyterian and supporter of the Reformed and Presbyterian regulative principle of worship (at least as he defines it) challenges the Westminster Confession's strict proscription against the use of most all images saying:

Some in the Presbyterian tradition have ruled these out on the ground that symbols must be based on explicit divine commands. Thus, they reject all visible symbols except the sacraments. However, I have earlier argued that the biblical regulative principle does not require a specific divine command for each detail of the Christian meeting. We do have the general command to communicate God's revelation, and there is no reason why that cannot be done through visible symbols as well as by the written and spoken word. And we have the precedent of Old Testament worship, which freely employed symbolism.

Furthermore, we cannot escape from symbolism without escaping from the world itself. We live in a "sacramental universe," for God has created the whole world as a means of revealing himself (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:19-20). Jesus' teaching freely employs illustrations from nature: plentiful harvest fields, the ripening of plants and weeds, and so on. If we worship out-of-doors, we are surrounded by symbols of God's truth. And when Israel worshipped indoors, the decorations and colors spoke eloquently of God's creation and redemption. We ourselves, as God's image, represent God. And human language is a symbolism. If we were to restrict the use of symbols in worship only to those explicitly authorized in Scripture, then we could use only the words in Scripture itself. Indeed, even the use of Bible translations would be debatable. Ironically, some Puritans who advocated a plain worship setting used that very plainness to symbolize the clarity of the gospel.<sup>81</sup>

A cautionary note should be sounded that any visual analogy, if not properly chosen, could unintentionally misrepresent the Lord's character or attributes. There is always the danger of teaching a different lesson than was

---

<sup>81</sup> John M. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1996), 73-74. To understand the Reformed context see the Westminster Confession of Faith (21.1): "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture," as quoted in Frame, 39.

intended. It must be pointed out, however, that the same is true of all verbal analogies and metaphors.

Finally, to understand why the Protestant Reformation yielded such a stringent interpretation of the Second Commandment one must understand the cultural situation of the times. While it is said that contemporary culture is overly enamored with images, Reformation culture was appalled by them. People awakened from their spiritual slumber by the preaching of the true Gospel realized that they had been deceived and led astray by the cult of images that flourished in the late Middle Ages. Their reaction against the images that they had once considered so dear was understandably strong, and at times, even violent.<sup>82</sup> It was in this cultural environment that the theological reasoning of the reformers was taking place. Like all people, their thinking was somewhat influenced by the events and opinions of their day. Having witnessed the widespread abuse of images they were very reluctant to tolerate their use. Many may not have even been able to imagine a constructive use being made of the images that had proven to be such a snare. Witnessing the idolatrous nature of the cult of images prevalent inside the Catholic Church during their time surely led them to wrongly assume that images would have a similar idolatrous pull upon the hearts of men in all times. This led them in their thinking to equate making an image with making an idol, which caused them to interpret the Second Commandment so strictly. Oddly, stained glass windows were very popular among the people in Switzerland during this period and Zwingli and other Swiss

---

<sup>82</sup> Michalski, 96.

reformers did not object to their presence.<sup>83</sup> Apparently, images in stained glass had never become an issue of idolatry and so, despite the fact that there is no substantive difference between stained glass images and painted ones, these were never an issue of contention in Switzerland.

### ***The Primacy of the Word***

Some critics of using multimedia argue that there is a biblically mandated primacy of the word in regard to the preaching ministry of the church. They say that to depart from the method which God has ordained would be unfaithful. Further, they argue that ignoring the primacy of the word in favor of other communication methods, such as visual media, will prove to be less effective as the word is the best medium through which to communicate God's truth.

### ***The Argument For the Primacy of the Word***

In his book, *The WORD is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age*, Gregory Reynolds states:

From the beginning to the end of the Bible, the Word is the principal means by which God communicates with His people and the world...The very fact of Scripture implies the centrality of the Word, written and preached, in the life of the church in all ages...

...The written Word informs...the oral Word. The *oral* is central in the life and worship of the church. Preaching is the primary means of grace and thus takes center stage as the living voice of the church's Savior and Lord.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Michalski, 56.

<sup>84</sup> Reynolds, 314.

Thus he stipulates his thesis that the church is to communicate the *kerygma* through the oral and written word. Reynolds claims that “the most cursory study of the Bible will lead even the impartial reader, who is honest with the text, to acknowledge the primacy of the word” and proceeds to support his claim by producing eight pages of examples from the Old and New Testaments in which either God’s Word, or the preaching of God’s Word, are emphasized in the text.<sup>85</sup> His argument is an argument from silence. That is to say that because the Scripture speaks of writing, preaching and testifying, but not of using visual means of communication, the church ought to limit itself to the former. Reynolds echoes Martin Lloyd-Jones who warned of allowing “the pulpit to be overshadowed by other means of communication” which would be equivalent to demonstrating a loss of faith in the “*the* means to which God has attached the special promise of His power.”<sup>86</sup>

Jacques Ellul offers a similar critique saying that while the word is capable of expressing truth, the image is not. The image, he says, can only convey reality. That is it can show places, a person’s expression, or a snap shot of an event, but it cannot show the truth behind these things. A picture can show a church, but it cannot tell what a church is. He writes:

No image is able to convey truth at all. This explains in part why all “spiritual” films are failures. When we insist on expressing spiritual matter this way through images, something other than truth is always perceived.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Reynolds, 315-323.

<sup>86</sup> Iain Murray, *David Martin Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1990) 345; quoted by Reynolds, 337.

<sup>87</sup> Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 30.

The word, on the other hand, is able to convey both reality and truth. It can deal with the concrete and the abstract. It alone has the power to express the religious truth behind the religious rite.<sup>88</sup>

Margaret Miles contends that images do not have the capacity in themselves to convey one particular meaning. She says that they lack “universality” by which she means there can be no fixed content to the interpretation of the image. The meaning gathered by the viewer is dependent upon context and time. She writes:

In what sense can an image claim universality? An image may be removed from the public discourse in which its range of meanings is acquired. It may be taken “bodily” from its original place—most frequently from a church to a museum. Or, left in its original location, it inevitably acquires new meanings; over time the changing discourse of the community stimulates different interests and therefore changes the messages received.<sup>89</sup>

As an example she points to the multiple implications that a viewer might possibly deduce from an eighth-century icon in Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome. This painting depicts the Virgin Mary in glory, holding the Christ child in her lap, and with the reigning Pope prostrate at her feet. Miles relates one published view that interprets the painting as intending to show the immense power of the Pope (Pope John VII who ruled from 705 until 777 AD) who has access, through his position as the head of the church, to the Virgin. A contrary and opposite interpretation, she suggests, might be the “radical relativizing” of his power. This view focuses upon the visual greatness of Mary and, in comparison, the degradation of the pope prostrate at her feet. She continues and suggests a

---

<sup>88</sup> Elull, 27-32.

<sup>89</sup> Miles, 29-30.

third view, a radical feminist interpretation, that contends the greatness of Mary in the picture, in relation to the position of the two males, depicts a “dramatic reversal...of earthly social arrangements in which the subservience of women testifies to the corruption of true values.”<sup>90</sup>

While this last interpretation is obviously fanciful, her point is well taken that a given image can create varying impressions in the minds of different people, thus calling into question the capacity images have to communicate truth effectively. She writes:

Our example, however, has raised a further difficulty with the interpretation of images; the multivalence of an image means that we can never definitively interpret it. The difficulty of understanding even the message intended, to say nothing of the far greater tentativeness with which one must suggest the spectrum of messages received, has been one of the major objections to the systematic use of visual images...

Surely visual religious images are susceptible to an even more bewildering range of understandings and misunderstandings than are written theological formulations. If, as the eighth-century iconophile Nicephorus claimed, the function of images is to convey theological information,<sup>48</sup> must not the “information” given and received from an image be even more obscure than the written word? What kind of theological knowledge is more aptly conveyed by an image than by a theological proposition?

---

<sup>48</sup> Andre Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins*, Bollingen Series, no. 35, (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1968), p. xlv.<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, what then is the use of visual images in preaching and teaching if they cannot sound a clear note (1 Cor. 14:7-8)?

---

<sup>90</sup> Miles, 30-31.

<sup>91</sup> Miles, 32.

### *The Argument Against the Primacy of the Word*

Of course there is a counterargument for each of these concerns. While it is conceded that the Scripture overwhelmingly speaks of verbal communication from God to his people, and from His people to the world, it does not do so exclusively. Already mentioned was the design of the tabernacle. The ninth chapter of Hebrews teaches that the structure, with its concealed Most Holy Place, visually was teaching that the sacrificial system was not able to open the way to the Mercy Seat by clearing the conscience of the worshipper (Heb. 9:8-9). Thus, at the moment that Jesus gave up His life on the cross, the curtain isolating the Most Holy Place was torn in two, demonstrating visually that the way to mercy was now open (Mt. 27:51). One could also look at Jesus' baptism during which God sent His Spirit in the form of a dove to rest upon Jesus, visually showing John the Baptist that Jesus was the Christ (Jn. 1:32-33). Many more examples could be cited such as the burning bush or the pillar of cloud and fire. The best example, however, is that of the Incarnation itself, as already discussed in a previous section. Jesus is the Word of God, given tangibly and visually. He said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). This being the case, the argument that God's exclusive method of communication in the Scripture is verbal is inaccurate. Therefore, the conclusion drawn from that argument, that only verbal communication (whether oral or written) is fit for the church, is likewise mistaken.

In regard to the inability of images to communicate clearly, it is also conceded that they do not have the ability to communicate with the precision of



words. Images standing alone are indeed subject to many different interpretations. However, the argument being put forth is for using images to supplement the existing verbal preaching and teaching ministry of the church, not to replace it. Therefore the question is not, can an image alone convey a single meaning to the audience, but rather can an image interpreted by words (spoken or written) convey a single meaning to the audience? Of course the answer is yes. Newspapers are filled each day with pictures that are accompanied by captions that explain the intended meaning to the reader/viewer. The “news picture is never allowed to speak simply in its own language as visual image; its caption directs and limits the interpretations that can plausibly be applied to it.”<sup>92</sup> Likewise, magazine or television advertisements are frequently dominated by images, but are always interpreted by some kind of verbal (text or voice) message.<sup>93</sup>

These lessons imply that images shown alone as art are subject to many interpretations. Images accompanied by interpretive words transform that image into a more definitive message. If this were not true then newspapers and advertisers would not use them, as the images would not suit their purposes. This being so, the preacher can likewise use images which he then interprets for his audience so as to fix their meaning. In this way the image can become a part of the supporting argument of his message. This is, for example, the way that Luther used woodcut pictures in his pamphlets and also in his translation of the German Bible. They were illustrations that were carefully denoted to explain their

---

<sup>92</sup> Miles, 129.

<sup>93</sup> Miles 131.

meaning so as to support the argument in his pamphlet's text or the story in the Scripture.<sup>94</sup>

It is further suggested that images allow the preacher to minister to the people in ways that words alone cannot. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>95</sup> This implies that the essence of man is more than just a rational mind but involves his emotions and affections as well. That being so, God commands man to respond to Him with all of his being, not just with his mind. Communicating with images has potential for enabling preachers and teachers to reach people on deeper levels than just the ratiocinative. Langer writes:

There is, however, an important part of reality that is quite inaccessible to the formative influence of language: that is the so-called "inner experience," the life of feeling and emotion. The reason why language is so powerless here is not, as many people suppose, that feeling and emotion are irrational; on the contrary they seem irrational because language does not help to make them conceivable and most people cannot conceive of anything without the logical scaffolding of words...Art objectifies the sentience and desire, the self-consciousness and world-consciousness, emotions and moods, that are generally regarded as irrational because words cannot give us clear ideas of them.<sup>96</sup>

That is to say that ordinary prosaic language is not as efficient a medium as visual images in regard to touching or moving the emotions or feelings.

Discursive language is very competent at communicating complex, intricate, or precise ideas. Contracts, operating instructions, rules, and legal

---

<sup>94</sup> Miles, 115.

<sup>95</sup> Mt. 22:37.

<sup>96</sup> Susanne Langer, "The Cultural Importance of Art," *Philosophical Sketches* (New York: Mentor, 1962), 79; quoted in Miles, 3.

documents, for example, require precision and clarity, and prosaic language is the best vehicle for conveying such information. Theological systems likewise are best served by careful constructs of language. The language of faith, however, benefits from both objective and subjective forms of expression. The spiritual values of faith, hope and love are not best communicated through reasoned argument, but through metaphorical expression.<sup>97</sup> Leonard Sweet says “theologians tried to create an intellectual faith, placing reason and order at the heart of religion. Mystery and metaphor were banished as too fuzzy, too mystical, too illogical.”<sup>98</sup> Now, he says, we are realizing that we live in a time in which “metaphor is at the heart of spirituality.”<sup>99</sup>

Visual communication at its best is metaphorical communication, and metaphors are a very powerful way to communicate. Nietzsche wrote, “We do not think good metaphors are anything very important, but I think a good metaphor is something even the police should keep an eye on.”<sup>100</sup> This is because they are effective “tools of thought.” They are the causes of our reasoning more than they are the consequences of our reasoning.<sup>101</sup>

Jesus frequently taught using parables, which are a form of metaphoric reasoning. They are stories that create a paradigm of thinking. As stated earlier, they do not illustrate a point; they are the point. The power of the metaphor lies in its ability to reduce a complex or poorly understood concept into a simpler or more ordered form that is more easily grasped by the mind. Jesus’ story of the

---

<sup>97</sup> Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 84.

<sup>98</sup> Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 86.

<sup>99</sup> Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 86.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 89.

<sup>101</sup> Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 93.

Prodigal Son (Lk.15:11-32) is a theological treatise on the nature of God encased in metaphorical terms that the people could easily comprehend. Likewise in the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1-23) Jesus explains the nature of man's heart in a way that the disciples could follow. Other metaphors are also included in Scripture that explain Jesus' identity to the people such the good shepherd, the bread from heaven, the bridegroom, and the Lamb of God.

Projected still pictures are excellent conveyers of symbols—as is the older technology of stained glass—while video is an excellent teller of narrative. A video narrative has the capacity to engage people's emotions, provoke reaction, invite identification, persuade minds, or lead to a moment of discovery. Consider the effect upon David of Nathan's metaphorical story (2 Sam. 12). It moved David to anger, then to a moment of discovery, and finally to repentance. Incorporating visual images (with their power to bypass the cerebrum and directly touch the emotions) with a good story has the potential to have a strong effect upon the people.

Of course herein lies a danger of using the power of the metaphor. Its inherent fuzziness, which is what makes it so accessible to people, can also lead to misunderstanding. Jesus explained the Parable of the Sower to His disciples, but how many of the multitude who heard it came away with the same understanding? It is likely that many did not. Therefore the visual metaphor, like its narrative cousin, needs to be explained carefully.

## ***The Christian Response to New Technologies***

The present time in history is one of rapid innovation and technological development. In less than one hundred years man went from being earthbound to the standing on the moon. What should be the church's response to burgeoning new technologies? In the past there has been a significant variance among believers in their response. Some have rejected technological change outright, many have embraced it fully, and most have not really considered their response or the impact that technological change can have upon the expression of their faith. This section will discuss the church's proper response to new technology, and specifically toward visual presentation technologies.

Leonard Sweet states, "Spirituality is shaped by technology. Always has been. Always will be."<sup>102</sup> Although this statement may seem to be a bit extreme, even sacrilegious, a little consideration will convince the reader of its truth. The religious practices of a nomad like Abraham were by necessity much simpler from those that could be conducted in the Temple in the city of Jerusalem (cities being made possible by the technological development of sustainable land cultivation). The technological advancement of the Roman road system along with accompanying advances in sailing technology made the Apostle Paul's traveling ministry possible. The invention of the printing press allowed Luther's teachings to spread across Europe and initiate the Protestant Reformation. The automobile allowed people to easily travel great distances to the church of their choice and made the megachurch possible. It could rightly be said that without Henry Ford there would be no Bill Hybels.

---

<sup>102</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 35.

All of these technological developments probably had more of an impact upon the church than believers at the time were able to predict or to grasp. An examination of the consequences of the printing press will serve as an example. Johannes Guttenberg invented the moveable type printing press in 1455 and the device was almost immediately pressed into the service of the Reformation. Ideas, teaching, and knowledge were able to spread rapidly across Europe. Whereas there were only about 15,000 “manuscript books” in all of Europe before 1455, there soon were many times that number of printed books and even many more pamphlets. The Bible, which had been unavailable to the common man, was translated into his vernacular language and made accessible to him. Because of this seemingly harmless invention, the power and authority of the Papacy was seriously eroded. The Roman Church was no longer the sole controller of the flow of information across Europe. Nor was it the sole source for teaching as now the people had direct access to the Bible and to the views of the reformers. The invention changed the way evangelism was undertaken, and affected liturgy and music. Educational methods were affected as the availability of printed material eliminated the need for memorization that an oral culture required. The leaders of the culture became the readers and the writers, and the primary method of thinking became the linear logic that is conducive to print.<sup>103</sup>

Most technical innovations affect the expression of the faith of the church, though perhaps not nearly so dramatically as that of the printing press. At times

---

<sup>103</sup> Reynolds, 280; Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 31,35; Brian Stewart, “Do We Really Have to Compete with TV?” D.Min. Thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1999, 31; John P. Jewell, *Wired for Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 48.

some Christians have responded to change by digging in their heels and refusing to accept it. Such people are often referred to as Luddites. Reynolds explains:

Ned Lud was born in Leicestershire, England in 1789. In early nineteenth century...he and his followers smashed labor saving textile machinery, due to the threat it posed to their weaving guild. Thus, ever since, those who are opposed to technology have been labeled as his followers. Historically, in the church, this tendency has been manifested in the Anabaptist impulse to build a culture entirely separate from the world of common grace. Anabaptists have in varying ways been suspicious of cultural, and especially technological, development.<sup>104</sup>

The Amish, and to a lesser extent, the Mennonites are good examples of the extremes of this position. They have purposely chosen to arrest their development at a certain (almost arbitrary) time in history so as to avoid dealing with the rapid cultural and technical changes that industrialization created.

Of course not all resisters of technology are so extreme, and many will embrace some technologies and eschew others, with or without sound reasons. Many of those who choose to reject the use of visual technologies in the church do so, however, with thoughtful motivation. The list of visual technology 'Luddites' who offer well articulated reasons against accepting these new technologies includes Marva Dawn, David Wells, Greg Reynolds, Jacques Ellul, and John MacArthur.

One of the reasons often cited for barring visual technology is that it feeds the idolatry of the American culture. It is suggested that technology has become one of the primary idols in this culture. By the word *idol* they do not refer to an object that is bowed to and worshipped. Guinness explains:

---

<sup>104</sup> Reynolds, 152-153.

In the biblical view, anything created—anything at all that is less than God, and most especially the gifts of God—can become idolatrous if it is relied upon inordinately until it becomes a full-blown substitute for God, and, thus, an idol that takes the place of God.<sup>105</sup>

They claim that the view that technology is the solution for all of man's problems is prevalent in the culture. Schultze says, "This is a deeply held belief in America: money buys technology, which can improve just about everything. Our gut sensibilities tell us that technological innovation is inherently good..."<sup>106</sup> Marva Dawn adds, "Because technological tools and toys function as principalities and powers, we have to realize that they easily overstep their bounds and take control of us."<sup>107</sup> Reliance upon technology, therefore, becomes a substitute for reliance upon God, making it an idol.

There is biblical precedent for being wary of allowing anything to substitute for complete reliance upon the Lord. God was angry with King David because he wanted to trust in numerical strength rather than in the Lord (1 Chron. 21:1-7). God condemned Asa for trusting in a treaty with the king of Aram rather than in the Lord for deliverance. Not learning from that rebuke, he turned to his physicians for healing rather than to the Lord and perished (2 Chron. 16: 1-14). Likewise Hezekiah was rebuked for taking all kinds of military preparations in anticipation of invasion, but not turning to God for protection (Is. 22).

Similarly, they say the church errs by relying upon its methods and technological tools, visual tools in particular, instead of upon God's power. In

---

<sup>105</sup> Guinness, 32.

<sup>106</sup> Schultze, 52.

<sup>107</sup> Marva Dawn, *Lost Cause*, 185.



effect, the success engendered by using these tools causes them to become a pitfall to the user. Grant explains:

Whenever the Gospel has been powerfully communicated, we fall prey to imagining the power lies in the image we have presented, the influence we have exerted and the method we have used. The better we get at presenting the image we want through the use of powerful and persuasive means (drama, media, etc.) the more alert we have to be to dangers of living off the apparent success of the images we present.<sup>108</sup>

The very strength of the technique becomes its weakness. Therefore, to avoid idolizing visual technology in the church some advocate barring it completely.

Another reason cited for barring visual technology is the secondary consequences that its use engenders. As pointed out, embracing any technological innovation has consequences. For example, Ivan Illich refused to use microphones and sound amplification equipment. Not, as you might think, because of the irritating fickleness of the technology, but because of the effect of the technology. Illich believed that using microphones led to a larger scale of communication—that is it promoted speaking to larger groups of people—which he considered to be impersonal. He thought that interacting with small groups was really better communication and refused to compromise.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, visual technologies have secondary consequences, which cause some to reject their use.

One such consequence is the lessening of the control of the pastor. Because of the time and technical demands of a visual ministry, the pastor is forced to work with a team, delegating to and accepting input from its members.

---

<sup>108</sup> Grant, 115.

<sup>109</sup> Schultze, 15.

He becomes the “guide on the side” rather than the “sage on the stage”, as Jewell phrases it.<sup>110</sup> The finished product is often a team construct. This contradicts the understanding that some have regarding the role of the pastor as being the sole shepherd, and is a situation some feel is to be avoided.<sup>111</sup> Other secondary consequences of concern are that visual media can turn the congregation from being a “dialogical community” to an audience of individual spectators, that it fosters the attitude of “religious consumption”, and that it morphs preaching and worship into entertainment.<sup>112</sup>

An alternative, and preferred approach to technology is to adapt it to become the servant of the church. Regarding this approach Schultze says:

This is a difficult way to proceed. It requires us to think carefully about the best ways to use communication technologies within worship for distinctly liturgical purposes. Once we put the purpose of worship ahead of the use of technology, we place demands on *when, how, where*, and especially *why* we use particular technologies. We cannot merely fall back on rhetoric about creating a “new visual language,” “speaking to youth,” or even “staying relevant.” Instead we have to justify the use of media within specific liturgical practices as *worship*.<sup>113</sup>

This approach avoids the negative American tendency to turn technology into an idol and harnesses its positive potential. Computer generated visual projection can help the singing of the congregation be “more robust, meaningful, and dialogical.”<sup>114</sup> Its flexibility can release the song leader from the rigid order of the hymnal, and it frees the people from singing down into a book. It enables the congregation to utilize creeds and other liturgies to which it would otherwise not

---

<sup>110</sup> Jewell, 128.

<sup>111</sup> Len Wilson, *Wired Church*, 41.

<sup>112</sup> Schultze, 27, 39.

<sup>113</sup> Schultze, 46.

<sup>114</sup> Schultze, 28.

have access. It encourages the “priesthood of all believers” as it allows many people to use their time and technical abilities to help teach the people and lead them in worship. It allows the Holy Spirit to work through more than one avenue of communication, and gives people more than one exposure to the message.

Properly used in the service of preaching and worship, visual technologies should not contribute to the creation of religious consumers who are looking to be entertained for an hour, but rather should enhance the interaction between teacher and learner, and between God and His people. Schultze says, “The basic structure of Christian worship and living are the same: God speaks and we respond in faith. Our use of technology should support that kind of God-initiated worship.”<sup>115</sup> Good use of media can give expression to the hopes, thoughts and fears of the people, thus opening up a passage into their hearts through which the preacher can speak the truth of God’s word. Likewise it can be employed to illustrate God’s answers, or show His response to the problems, questions, and attitudes of the people. At its best it acts like a microphone, amplifying the preacher’s voice (and hopefully the voice of God through him) so that the people may hear more clearly.

It must be pointed out that adapting technology means not abandoning old methods and technologies, but integrating the new into the old. A church need not be high-tech to be multimedia, or multisensory. A ninth-century Orthodox service of worship with candles, icons, incense, and chanting achieved the same effect. The church should look upon technology as providing tools that can be called upon when the occasion dictates their use. It is to be blended into the

---

<sup>115</sup> Schultze, 24.

existing communication and worship forms of the church, and to be reinterpreted by its traditions, so that it speaks the language of the community of faith and not of the secular culture. Ministry plus technology has the potential to achieve powerful results. Ministry without technology still has the potential to achieve powerful results. Technology without ministry, however, is dead.<sup>116</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, it is obvious that there is a great diversity of opinion held among Christian theologians and writers regarding the four theological areas discussed above. The views of these men and women are often contradictory, deeply held, and forcefully expressed. Often, the individual's viewpoint has been strongly influenced by his culture, time in history, and the church's immediate experience with images during his era. The wise youth pastor or church leader should be cognizant that his opinions are most likely shaped by these same factors and he should consider if, given different immediate circumstances, he would be of the same opinion. He must differentiate between those theological principles that are universally applicable and binding for all times and those that are significant and applicable only for a certain time or a certain set of circumstances. Ultimately he must decide what is right for his time, his culture, and his flock. To this end the next chapter will provide the reader with a review of the literature pertaining to visual communication and image usage in the church so that he may better understand the works that inform the discussions in this project and build upon them in his personal study.

---

<sup>116</sup> Jewell, 124.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Review of the Literature**

The first three chapters have discussed the current situation regarding visual image usage in American youth ministry, the history of image usage by the church, the contemporary research regarding the positive potential of visual communication, and the theological issues and problems surrounding its use. Now it is time to examine some of the main contributing works and authors behind these discussions so that the reader may have a better understanding of the diversity of opinion that informs them. For clarity, this chapter will be divided into four areas, namely:

- 1) the historical usage of images by the church,
- 2) the theological issues surrounding using visual images in the church,
- 3) the contemporary usage of projected images and multimedia in the church,
- 4) the effect of visual communication on cognition.

In the following pages the books and articles in these four areas that proved to be most significant and helpful will be discussed.

#### ***The Historical Usage of Images by the Church***

Understanding the progression of thought through the centuries regarding the use of visual images in the teaching and preaching ministry of the church is essential to understanding the widely differing views currently held by Christians in America. It is also important to understand both how the church has historically used these visual images and how it has abused them in order to fully

grasp the potential benefits and pitfalls that images might bring to the modern-day church. Several books provide excellent insight into the oscillation of historical opinion and practice regarding image use. Taken together, these works equip the reader with a good overview of the theological, cultural, and technological factors at work in determining the dominant views of the church during the last two thousand years of its history.

The innovative book to which most recent writers refer is Margaret Miles', *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture*.<sup>1</sup> Miles, who taught at Harvard Divinity School, writes from the perspective of a theologically liberal historical theologian. Postmodern writers such as Michel Foucault (whom she references frequently) have heavily influenced her outlook on history, and this enables her to come at the material from a fresh perspective. In her book she challenges the dominant understanding of church history, which she sees as being constructed solely from the extant written texts, and examines the visual record of the church. She argues that this visual history adds to the understanding of the views and beliefs of the masses of Christians throughout the ages who (being largely illiterate) have not been able to leave a written legacy of their thoughts. The skilled users of language, she says, do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the masses. Therefore, to gain a full understanding of the thinking of the commoners, one must examine the images and visual elements that they considered to be important to their faith.

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

She begins her book by exploring the important relationship between earthly vision and abstract understanding of spiritual things. She believes that, figurative *seeing* is dependent on literal seeing, and that faith must be understood and articulated by the use of metaphors. Visual images often provide such metaphors and have been instrumental to the faith of many Christians through the centuries. Miles includes an excellent discussion regarding the hermeneutics of images. That is to say, how the received meaning of a particular picture is variable based upon the reference frame of the viewer. This will be of interest to those who desire to use projected images in their ministries and who want to ensure that the desired point is clearly communicated to their audience.

In Miles the reader will find a heavy-handed dose of feminism woven throughout the book. The reader will also find a number of pages dedicated to discussing the relationship between language and power, and a general predisposition to viewing history through a postmodern lens, which focuses on the struggle for power. There are two chapters, however, that are outstanding resources for those interested in appreciating the important role that religious images have played within the church at times in its history. The first one (Chapter Three in the book, "The Evidence of Our Eyes: Fourth-Century Roman Churches") covers the period in which the church transitioned from an illegal religion to becoming the official religion of Rome. This was a pivotal period in the development of the acceptance and use of images within the church and Miles' historical description and insights are invaluable. The second important chapter (Chapter Five, "Vision and the Sixteenth-Century Protestant and Catholic

Reforms”) details the transition from the image-glutted church of the late Middle Ages through the Reformation. Her lengthy descriptions of church interiors and liturgical practices before and after the Reformation are fascinating and revealing. It provides a clearer understanding of the historical factors surrounding the iconoclastic theological tendencies of the reformers.

A book that is equally valuable, and many may find to be more accessible, is William A. Dyrness’, *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue*.<sup>2</sup> Dyrness is an evangelical Christian who is trying to address critically the strained relationship between the evangelical protestant church and the visual arts. The church leader interested in using any sort of visual art in the church will find this book an invaluable resource. Dyrness includes an excellent discussion regarding the present uneasy relationship between the visual arts and the evangelical church, and between art and faith in general. His analysis details the potential benefits and pitfalls that bringing visual images into the church might entail.

One of the great values of Dyrness’ book is his thorough examination of how the usage of visual images by the church varied according to century and geography. His examination of the subject is more complete than that found in Miles, who focuses upon only a couple of key transitional periods. Dyrness begins with the images used by the First-Century church and follows the continuous development of image use until the present day. He does, however, limit the scope of his study following the Reformation to the Calvinist stream of

---

<sup>2</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).



Protestantism in America. He includes an excellent overview and analysis of the elaborate image usage of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, which is often foreign to evangelicals. Interspersed within the pages of text are judiciously chosen prints that serve as excellent illustrations of the subject described and rivet the historical images, almost like page markers, into the reader's memory.

Dyrness' examination of the art of the church probes deeper than the progression of style, however. He examines the underlying theological issues that motivated the church to utilize or reject images in different eras. He also brings to light competing voices in history that called the church in differing directions in regard to images, and explains the motivating factors behind them.

Another evangelical writer who makes an important contribution to understanding the historic and contemporary use of images in the church is Francis Schaeffer. He wrote two books that, though coming from different perspectives, touch upon the issue. His first book, *Art and the Bible*, is really a compilation of two short essays.<sup>3</sup> In these essays Schaeffer, like Dyrness who came after, addresses the relationship between art and evangelical Christianity. The first essay, "Art in the Bible", challenges the assumption that the Second Commandment, which stipulates that no graven image is to be fashioned and worshipped, is a prohibition against all forms of religious art. Schaeffer details many of the Old Testament verses describing the representational art used in the Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, and through out Hebrew religious history. His point is to demonstrate that it is the making of an idol of the image, not the use of the image itself, that is sin.

---

<sup>3</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973).

Schaeffer's second essay is much more complex and is entitled simply, "Some Perspectives on Art." In this wide-ranging essay he explores what makes art *art*, and how man, who is made in God's image, reflects His creative nature when he creates art. Schaeffer moves on to discuss how a work of art is really created out of the artist's worldview, and how a body of art affects and shapes worldview. Further, he discusses what makes art *Christian art*, and what makes it good Christian art. This essay is interesting and thought provoking, and is beneficial to the reader seeking to evaluate the appropriateness of image use in historical or contemporary church.

The other book by Schaeffer that the reader will find beneficial is his classic, *How Should We Then Live?*<sup>4</sup> In this book, Schaeffer examines the changing historical worldviews of Western Civilization from the Roman Empire to the present. He uses each era's art as a window of illustration to expose the paradigm of thought underlying the culture. Of special relevance to this thesis project was his examination of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation. The many pages of pictures depicting the art from these eras are very helpful and illustrative. Schaeffer, an unapologetic evangelical Christian and a profound thinker, is not afraid to expose the unbiblical drift and humanistic tendencies of the Roman Church during the Middle Ages. He likewise does not gloss over the shortcomings of the protestant reformers, nor the contemporary evangelical church. Though the vast scope of this project requires him to paint with a broad brush, his analysis is insightful and beneficial to the reader seeking to understand the art of the church and the thinking that produced it.

---

<sup>4</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, NJ:Fleming Revell, 1976).

In contrast to Dyrness and Schaeffer, who wrote about transitions occurring during long sweeps of time, Sergiusz Michalski writes about the issue of visual images specifically during the Protestant Reformation in his book, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe*.<sup>5</sup> Focusing upon this brief segment of history allows Michalski to write in depth about the views and theologies of individual reformers, specifically Luther, Karlstadt, Zwingli, and Calvin. He includes plentiful quotations from each man, which helps to illustrate both the direction and the tone of their thoughts. He also delves deeply enough into the history and politics of the time to provide the reader with a broader understanding of the non-theological factors that also influenced the actions of these men. Further, he examines how the views of these leaders played out in the actions of their followers and adherents in the towns and villages that lay within their area of influence. The reader with an interest in understanding why the various protestant traditions took somewhat dissimilar paths on the use of images will find this book very helpful.

Also writing about a relatively narrow period of church history is Eduard Syndicus in his book, *Early Christian Art*.<sup>6</sup> As the title implies, this book examines the visual images created and used by the church of the first centuries of its existence. Of special interest is the chapter on the art of the catacombs, as it compiles and explains some of the more common themes and images found there. Syndicus writes from a Roman Catholic perspective and the protestant

---

<sup>5</sup> Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe*, Christianity and Society in the Modern World, eds. Hugh McLeod and Bob Scribner (New York: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Eduard Syndicus, *Early Christian Art*, Faith and Fact Books: Catholic Truth in the Scientific Age, ed. Lancelot Sheppard, no. 116 (London: Burns and Oates, 1962).

reader may find his views of image use in the church a bit different from those to which he is accustomed. The book is, therefore, helpful not only for gaining an understanding of the early art and symbols of the church, but also for gaining a perspective on the Catholic understanding of the use of visual images in the church.

In their book, *Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics*, Zelensky and Gilbert provide a resource for the reader with an interest in developing a better understanding of the history of iconography and the theology behind its historic and current use in the Eastern Orthodox churches. They write less from a historian's perspective than from the perspective of an advocate, but they do give good insight into the thinking and beliefs of those who utilize this Eastern form of visual aid. Their statements will not be persuasive (or even completely understandable) to those who are steeped in a more rational approach to the Christian faith, but they provide a good exposure to a tradition that may be unfamiliar to the reader. Similarly, Rowan Williams's book, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with Icons of Christ*, explores the spiritual and meditative use of iconography.<sup>7</sup> This work focuses specifically on practical application of specific icons in the meditative life of the Orthodox believer and is more detailed in its description of this type of spiritual practice.

Finally, Justo Gonzalez' book, *The Story of Christianity*, is an excellent resource that places the history of the church into perspective.<sup>8</sup> While this is

---

<sup>7</sup> Rowan Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with Icons of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco: Harper Row, 1984).

really a church history text, Gonzalez pays attention to the type of images used and the extent of their usage by the church in the successive eras of its history from the first century to the Reformation. The value of the book is that in a systematic and chronological format it lays the secular political and cultural conditions along side of the theological and ecclesiastical currents, providing a good understanding of the sweep of history.

### ***Theological Issues***

As theological perspectives on image usage have varied throughout church history, so they vary to this day. Contemporary writers differ greatly in their views and opinions of the role that images can or should play in the contemporary church. This discussion will be limited to writers who come from the evangelical protestant tradition so as to narrow its scope. There is, however, still a considerable divergence of opinion among them. The following discussion of significant titles is structured to progress from one extreme of thought to the other. Beginning with those authors who are adamantly opposed to utilizing visual technologies within the bounds of the church, the perspectives will move steadily through those who have some qualms about it, finishing with those who are unreserved proponents.

On one side of the argument are the ideas of Jacques Ellul. His book, *The Humiliation of the Word*, offers a lengthy argument for the proper preeminence of the *word* in public discourse, and especially in the church.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).

Ellul's writing is wordy and somewhat difficult to follow, but his arguments are well conceived. Written in 1985, this book obviously does not address many of the specific practices of churches today that employ computer-generated multimedia. The arguments contained therein, however, are directly applicable to such presentations and the reader can readily infer the negative opinion that Ellul would have for such visual distractions.

Ellul's thesis is that the modern world has become dominated by the sense of sight (that is by images), thus pushing aside the rational arguments of words. He explores the process through which this transformation of society has occurred and discusses its ramifications. Specifically, he argues that in the church the *word* (flowing from the fact of God's revealed Word) ought to be dominant and warns against the invasion of images. Images, he argues, are really idols in the church. He deals at length with the church's history of image use, focusing specifically upon the Greek Orthodox use of the icon. His in-depth discussion of the theology of the icon is valuable reading for those with an interest in the subject. He concludes that the icon could be a valid expression of what he calls, "the mystery of the eighth day."<sup>10</sup> By this he means a fulfilled eschatology. However, he argues that since man does not yet live in the eighth day, such images are dangerously misleading and ought not to be used as they are presently. Ellul also focuses upon what he sees as the invasion of images into the Western church and its impact upon it. He details the difference between people trained in the use of the word and those addicted to images, which he says lessens the depth of their thought.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ellul, 241.

The reader will find little nuance or compromise in Ellul's views. He represents one extreme of thought that advocates the rejection of the image as a valid expression of faith in the church, and he would never advocate its incorporation into its preaching and teaching ministry.

The conclusions of Gregory Edward Reynolds in his book, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures*, resemble those of Jacques Ellul regarding the appropriateness of image use in the church.<sup>11</sup> However, being an American author and writing in 2001 enables him to discuss contemporary audiovisual usage in the American evangelical church. Reynolds addresses the church's response to a technologically changing culture, specifically focusing upon the ministry of preaching. His thesis is that changing the preaching method actually changes the message and, therefore, ought not to be done.

Reynolds' book is lengthy and wide-ranging. He covers the development of media theory and of modern and postmodern philosophical thought. He examines idolatry in the Bible and man's continuing propensity for it (which includes man's love for images). He discusses the effect that he believes the electronic media has upon society and the church, and indicates ways that he thinks the church has compromised itself in this regard. Lastly, he produces a spirited argument for the primacy of preaching and the office of the preacher.

Reynolds holds firm opinions and expresses them strongly. He does not like to hold principles in tension but prefers to embrace and condemn. There is, however, much insight to be gained from reading this work. His chapters

---

<sup>11</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001).

covering media theory and theorists provide an excellent overview of the theoretical audiovisual landscape. Likewise, his chapter on the primacy of preaching is an excellent source for understanding the argument against incorporating visual media into the sermon. Reynolds is definitely a stasist, resisting almost any change in the name of relevance (he grudgingly permits letting go of the King James Bible in favor of a more modern translation such as the New King James). However, his arguments are well organized and worth consideration.

Marva Dawn is a writer who also follows in the stream of, and frequently quotes, Jacques Ellul. She is, however, willing to entertain nuance and tension in a way that Ellul was not. In *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, as well as in *Is It a Lost Cause?*, Dawn deals with the topic of altering the traditional methods of the church in order to achieve relevance with a changing culture.<sup>12</sup> She is definitely a traditionalist and argues for maintaining traditional church practices where possible and where practical, but she understands and articulates the contemporary tension between changing American society and the pressure that places upon the church to transform itself and the church's desire to maintain its traditions.

In *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, Dawn explains this tension in terms of Jesus' admonition to be in the world but not of the world. By framing the argument thusly she creates a continuum between the two opposite poles of isolation from the culture and complete accession to the culture. In doing so she

---

<sup>12</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for this Urgent Time* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); Marva J. Dawn, *Is It a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church's Children* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997).



avoids the absolutism that describes the thinking of Ellul and Reynolds. Dawn challenges the church to find the correct spot on the continuum such that it is able to speak to the culture effectively, but has not become overly worldly. She sees this point as being rather closer to the Ellul pole than to the Willowcreek pole (for lack of better terms).

Another important contribution that Dawn adds to the discussion is to introduce the concept of cultural idols. Specifically, in regard to the subject of this paper, she accuses technology of being one of the “principalities and powers” of American culture.<sup>13</sup> As such, she provides theological rationale for avoiding dependence upon such tools.

If there is a notable weakness of Dawn’s writing, it stems from her dependence upon the opinions of writers belonging to a single camp. That is to say, she has read the opinions and research of those writers who agree with her position, but has not thoroughly investigated those who differ. For example, in *Dumbing Down*, she agrees with and repeats the claim that television viewing has the effect of making children less intelligent, and even reduces the size of their brains.<sup>14</sup> Had she read widely in the scientific literature regarding the effect of television upon cognition in children she would have realized that these charges were scientifically unfounded, have been debunked, and are, in fact, ridiculous. Similarly, she often banishes innovations such as multimedia or

---

<sup>13</sup> Marva Dawn, *Is It a Lost Cause?*, 185.

<sup>14</sup> Marva Dawn, *Dumbing Down*, 6-7. Dawn exclusively refers to Jane Healy’s book published in 1990, and Christopher Lasch’s book published in 1979, both of whom are educators and not scientists. She never refers to any scientific data; instead she simply quotes the authors’ conclusions as facts. See Jane Healey, *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don’t Think* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Christopher Lasch, “Schooling and the New Illiteracy,” *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979).

contemporary music, referencing the arguments of their critics, without thoroughly considering the arguments of their proponents. Further, she has a tendency to make claims without any substantiation. For example, she asserts, without any substantiation, that the invention of the automobile robbed commuters of the “genial conversation and social connections” experienced by those who commute by bus or train. One is left to wonder if she has ever ridden on a rush-hour bus or subway train, an experience that strikes many people as being less than congenial. Unfortunately, such excesses and errors diminish the confidence the reader can place in her conclusions.

Of special note is Os Guinness’ short but excellent book, *Dining with the Devil*.<sup>15</sup> Guinness, like Marva Dawn, recognizes the continuum between being in the world and being of the world. He writes specifically regarding the modern phenomenon of the megachurch, and so encompasses many of the innovative methods used by those ministries, such as multimedia. The reader gets the impression that he, like Dawn, prefers the traditional methods, but Guinness remains more fluid in his writing and rarely takes a hard position. Rather, he sets up the dialectic tension between relevance and compromise and explores the church’s response between these two poles. Guinness is careful to fully appreciate the arguments of a practice’s proponents and critics, and is fair in his evaluations. He reserves his withering criticisms for those on both extremes of the spectrum who take their positions reflexively and without careful thought.

---

<sup>15</sup> Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993).

The strength of Guinness' book is that he frames the church's response to modernity in theological terms. He eschews pragmatism without theological reflection, arguing that effective does not mean justified. Likewise, he rejects traditionalism's stasis in the face of a changing world, a response that also lacks theological reasoning. All in all, Guinness challenges all preachers and church leaders to think about their actions and to provide justification for what direction they choose to take.

Very similar to Os Guinness' approach is that of Quentin Schultze. His book, *High-Tech Worship?*, also asks hard questions of its readers.<sup>16</sup> Whereas Guinness tends to be a traditionalist, Schultze tends to be an innovator. However, he shares Guinness' emphasis upon theological reflection before action. Schultze's book focuses directly upon using visual presentational technology in the church and so is important reading for anyone interested in the subject. His responses and opinions are measured and thoughtful, and stem from careful reflection upon the topic. His thesis is that liturgical wisdom (by that he means how to plan, order, and conduct services of worship) should control the use of presentational technologies. That is to say that technology should be adapted to fit the needs and theology of the church, and not be adopted carelessly.

Schultze explores the potential for using visual media in the church and provides a cogent argument for doing so. He also, and in equal measure, explains how it can be distracting and even detrimental to worship if not used

---

<sup>16</sup> Quentin J. Schultze, *High-Tech Worship: Using Presentational Technology Wisely* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004).

wisely. He is conversant with church history and Christianity's various traditions, and uses both historical and sectarian examples to point out that there are many ways to achieve the same goal. For example, his use of monastic worship as an illustration of multisensory worship was enlightening. It shares significant commonalities of experience with a "high-tech" worship service, but achieves the effect through different means. Schultze appreciates the "gut" tendency of Americans to embrace technology and call it *good* and warns against thoughtlessly doing so. At the same time he exposes the hypocrisy of traditionalists who reflexively criticize all innovation as compromise, but who have embraced many technological innovations (with their accompanying consequences) without even being aware of having done so. Taken as a whole, Schultze's book is a balanced appraisal of the potentials and pitfalls of visual technologies and a guidebook to their effective use in the church.

An excellent book written by a proponent of using visual technologies in church is John Jewell's, *Wired for Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church*.<sup>17</sup> While much of this book fits most naturally under the next section of this paper (and will be mentioned there), interwoven throughout its pages are excellent theological reflections and insights regarding the church's response to new technologies. Though an obvious supporter of using technology, Jewell is not a blind supporter thereof. He details pitfalls, problems and spiritual dangers that are inherent within these innovations. He uses different language than Marva Dawn (he uses the term *messianic*), but

---

<sup>17</sup> John P. Jewell, *Wired for Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004).

describes the same potential for technology to easily become idolatrous in the American church due to the seemingly innate tendency of Americans to view all technology as good.

The strength of this book lies in its ability to create proper perspective on the subject of technology in the church. Jewell insists that these advances are only tools that can help ministry, but frequently reiterates what the essence of real ministry is so that merely using technology cannot be confused with actually doing ministry. His attitude can be illustrated by the titles of two of his chapters which read: “Ministry and Technology—It’s All About Ministry,” and “Forget About Technology—But if You Must—And We Know You Will: New Directions and Opportunities.” Even those who feel strongly that using visual technologies in the preaching ministry of the church is compromising its true character will appreciate Jewell’s attempt to keep the reader’s focus upon the church’s true mission.

Lastly, representing the polar opposite of Jacques Ellul is Leonard Sweet. Sweet is an open advocate of embracing new technologies, especially visual technologies, and incorporating images into the teaching and preaching ministry of the church. His two books, *Carpe Manana* and *Postmodern Pilgrims* comprise a call for the church to radically modify its method in order to reach a changing culture.<sup>18</sup> Sweet’s writing is reminiscent of Marshall McLuhan’s. Like McLuhan, Sweet is a student of the contemporary culture, well read in many areas, who spins off ideas and proposals so rapidly that it is difficult to assimilate them all in

---

<sup>18</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World* (Nashville, TN.: Broadman and Holman, 2000).

one reading. There is not really a unifying theory tying all of it together, nor are empirical arguments made to support the ideas that are presented. Instead, Sweet's books are a montage of observations, personal experiences, and narratives mixed with published (by others) research data, news reports, and opinion polls. The effect is a fast-paced, postmodern cultural experience for the reader.

Both books, which are very similar in nature and content, include a lengthy argument for the church's use of visual images to reach today's culture. He stresses that the church must be E.P.I.C., which is his acronym for Experiential, Participatory, Image-driven, and Connected. Of special interest for this paper is his emphasis on experience and image. Sweet eschews the linear logic of the lecture and encourages the church to embrace metaphor and narrative. He calls for the church to speak to people's hearts, not just their minds. Rather than the church fighting against the current of culture, Sweet advocates paddling with it and taking advantage of the direction it is going.

Exactly what a local church would look like if it heeded his call is not made clear. The reader may get the idea that Sweet is more interested in prompting thought regarding change than he is in promoting a directly applicable model. Those who are in the opposing camp will see in Leonard Sweet's books all of their worst fears. These works are lacking in the characteristics of logical thoroughness that they cherish and wish to protect in the church. In them, however, the reader will find what he can also find in Ellul and Reynolds, namely a desire to see people come to a deeper faith in Jesus.

### ***The Use of Projected Images and Multimedia in the Church***

As digital technologies have developed they have been progressively employed in the service of the church. A number of books have been written that deal with various aspects of this embrace of technology, and five will be discussed here. This discussion will be arranged such that it flows from the books that deal primarily with theoretical and theological considerations to those that deal primarily with practical applications of visual media in ministry.

The first book to be discussed has already been briefly mentioned, namely John Jewell's, *Wired for Ministry*. Jewell is director of instructional technology and distance learning at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary and obviously has a great interest in the subject. His book is an examination of how the church can, and whether it should, employ the various new digital technologies in its ministry. As such he covers visual media, e-mail, instant messaging, and the web as potential conduits for ministry. As previously mentioned, this is more of a serious consideration of the church's proper response to these new technologies than it is a "how-to" book. Its strength is its focus on the proper integration of technology into ministry, and not the other way around. His emphasis upon the definition of real, biblical ministry and the importance of the community in the body of Christ is refreshing to find in a book about technology.

Of special benefit to the reader will be Jewell's discussion of using the implementation of new technologies as a pretext for developing the lay ministry of the church in a meaningful and significant way. His insightful analysis of the

unscriptural “lock” the pastorate often maintains on the ministry is applicable to many local churches. Also of significance are his ideas for utilizing the church’s website as an effective vehicle for disseminating information that is not relationally dependent (the kind of information that is not best relayed by a person).

Progressing from technology in general and focusing more specifically upon visual technology in ministry is a book by Len Wilson and Jason Moore entitled, *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*.<sup>19</sup> Wilson and Moore have both served the local church in media ministry and bring a wealth of practical experience to the discussion. The strength of this collaborative work lies in its understanding of what it takes to develop an effective media ministry. This is a “how-to” book, of sorts. It is not, however, about the mechanics of making visual presentations for local church consumption as much as it is about the philosophy of media ministry.

Wilson and Moore understand visual presentations to be more of an art form than a conduit for the transmission of detailed information, and treat it as such. They explain their philosophy and provide a defense for it. They then proceed to explain how visual media, as art, can be employed in the service of the church. Their main thrust is that visual media are best suited for relating a narrative or story. It is a form of communication that has inherent ambiguity, as is true of all art, and this should be accepted and used and not despised. The sermon proper is well suited for the conveyance of specific, detailed information,

---

<sup>19</sup> Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship* (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 2002).



such as theological doctrine, and that is the proper place for such material to be covered. The visual presentation is better suited for stirring people's thoughts, emotions, and imaginations regarding a subject or idea. Accompanying the book is a DVD (the mark of the video age) displaying some of their work as an illustration of what they intend for visual media.

The weakness of Wilson and Moore's book is that it reflects the thinking of two relatively young men who have never known the church without visual media, and who have not read or thought deeply about the potential downside to using it. Having grown up in the technology age they take its existence for granted and do not seem to be familiar with (at least they do not address them) the warnings against a full embrace of this technology without due reflection of the consequences. In contrast to John Jewell or Quentin Schultze—two other proponents of using visual media—Wilson and Moore lack the theological training that would enable them to fully appreciate the broader issues surrounding their field. Additionally, when they mention Rembrandt as a Renaissance Italian painter, one wonders how far their education extends outside of their field, how careful and accurate is their research, and what kind of editorial staff their publisher possesses.<sup>20</sup> Still, their book is valuable and insightful and is clearly the product of two good-hearted men who are experienced in the field of visual media ministry and have an excellent understanding of its potential.

---

<sup>20</sup> Wilson and Moore, *Digital Storytellers*, 88.

Also worth consideration is Len Wilson's first book on the subject of visual media, *The Wired Church: Making Media Ministry*.<sup>21</sup> This book has some overlap with his collaborative effort with Jason Moore, but is less philosophical and focuses much more on the specific technical details of implementing media ministry. Of special importance is Wilson's emphasis upon the team ministry approach. He details why it is needed, how to implement it, and, most importantly, the overall benefits that flow to the ministry when it is employed. The development of team ministry, which is mentioned by most of those who write on the subject, is an unexpected blessing to the local church that can flow from the media ministry even though it has nothing to do with the actual technology. The concept has application and promise for the whole of the ministry and should be considered even if a local church does not desire a media component.

Tim Eason's book, *Media Ministry Made Easy: A Practical Guide to Visual Communication*, is aptly titled.<sup>22</sup> It is a "how-to" book of visual presentation production. After the requisite discussions of media ministry philosophy and team ministry, Eason launches into specific technical areas such as graphics production, PowerPoint usage, and video production. He details the equipment, software, and time that is required to achieve the results that experienced church media ministries achieve (such as those contained on Wilson and Moore's DVD). For those actually involved in media ministry, this book will be a very helpful resource and will help to solve many of the technical problems that plague volunteer-run media ministries. For those not interested in how to set their

---

<sup>21</sup> Len Wilson, *The Wired Church: Making Media Ministry*, (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Tim Eason, *Media Ministry Made Easy: A Practical Guide to Visual Communication* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003).

computer's graphics card to match their projector's resolution (SVGA is 800 x 600, XGA is 1024 x 768) the majority of information contained in the book will be superfluous if not overwhelming. It is worth reading, however, for gaining an appreciation of the issues involved in doing this sort of ministry well. It is a sobering reminder that effective media ministry cannot and should not be entered into quickly, cheaply, or half-heartedly by the local church.

Finally, Jay Delp and Joel Lusz have written a book specifically targeting visual presentations in youth ministry entitled, *Just Shoot Me! A Practical Guide for Using Your Video Camera in Youth Ministry*.<sup>23</sup> This little book details the possibilities, potential, and practical instructions for using video in youth ministry. It especially focuses on using footage that is planned, shot, and produced in the context of the local church youth ministry. Although video footage of youth events is easy to gather, and commonly used, turning that video footage into a quality presentation is a bit harder. Delp and Lusz show how to improve the quality of the product produced and offer ideas on how to creatively expand the use of the video camera in ministry. They discuss the available equipment that is needed and beneficial, although due to the rapidly changing and advancing technology many items and their associated costs have changed in the four years since publication.

This book is definitely written by two adamant proponents of visual media, both of whom have extensive youth ministry experience. For the youth pastor or volunteer interested in learning how to effectively use the camera, or looking for

---

<sup>23</sup> Jay Delp and Joel Lusz, *Just Shoot Me! A Practical Guide for Using Your Video Camera in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2002).

ideas on how to justify the expense of a camera to the church board, this book is an excellent reference. It lacks any serious reflection on the philosophy or assumptions underlying the use of visual media, and is, as the title promises, a practical guide to using it.

### ***The Effect of Visual Communication upon Cognition***

The body of research regarding the potential effect that visual communication can have upon the way that people think and behave is substantial and varied. It has been conducted in such varied academic fields as neurobiology, psychology, education, and communication. Even the advertising industry has substantially contributed to the extant body of knowledge. This section will detail some of the research that is pertinent to the discussion of using visual media to teach and persuade. This section will be divided into three parts covering: the connection between emotion and cognition and the role visual stimuli can play in this interaction, the effect that visual media may have upon cognition, and visual thinking and education.

#### ***Emotion and Cognition***

Ross Buck and his associates have published a number of articles and papers upon the topic of emotion and cognition that are educational and helpful in understanding the interaction between these two human processes. In a lengthy paper entitled, "Emotion and Cognition," Buck lays out the traditional views of the emotion/cognition interaction and uses modern research to sharpen

the understanding of these processes.<sup>24</sup> In this paper Buck distinguishes between “knowledge by description” and “knowledge by acquaintance.” The former is an example of analytic cognition and is predominantly carried out in the left hemisphere of the cerebrum. Such thinking is linear, logical, and symbolic. “Knowledge by acquaintance,” on the other hand, is an example of syncretic cognition and is predominantly carried out in the right hemisphere of the cerebrum. This type of thinking is holistic and processes information and stimuli that is visual, auditory, and tactual. In a normal, healthy person these two types of cognition are always progressing simultaneously, as the two hemispheres of the brain are in constant communication via the corpus callosum. Buck’s research shows therefore that one can influence a person’s thinking and decision-making by stimulating either cognitive process. Thus, visual presentations, such as multimedia, can potentially be effective in persuading youth in the context of youth ministry.

In “Emotional Education and Mass Media,” Buck elaborates upon the concepts discussed above.<sup>25</sup> He explains that because there are two types of cognition occurring simultaneously, there are also two types of communication occurring simultaneously. One type of communication is propositional and stimulates analytical cognition. This communication, using printed or spoken language, utilizes learned symbol systems. Hence, the message received must

---

<sup>24</sup> Ross Buck, “Emotion and Cognition: A Developmental-Interactionist Perspective,” Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development held in Toronto, April 25-28, 1985. ERIC, ED 260849.

<sup>25</sup> Ross Buck, “Emotional Education and Mass Media: A New View of the Global Village,” in *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*, ed. Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Susan Pingree (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988).

be reconstructed and interpreted to be understood by the audience. The other type of communication is emotional communication. This type of communication, as Buck puts it, is from limbic system to limbic system. This communication is spontaneous and not cognitively determined (that is not consciously constructed). The wise youth or church leader will learn from this excellent chapter that he and his church are communicating all of the time, even if they are not saying anything. Their facial expressions and body posture are speaking loudly to their people, and may not be confirming what their words are saying.

Another excellent article is, "Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Affect, Reason, and Involvement in Persuasion: The ARI Model and the CASC Scale."<sup>26</sup> In this detailed article the authors build upon the foundation explained above and demonstrate that emotional communication is central to the persuasion process. They use the modern political election process for examples as it is currently driven by the visual medium of television, and visual images primarily speak the language of emotion. The concept behind Figure 1 in Chapter One is taken from this article. It demonstrates that emotional persuasion (syncretic cognition) is always working, and sometimes is more powerful than propositional communication (analytic cognition). The authors also describe a mathematical model for evaluating the relative strengths of each form of communication in a given advertisement, and apply it to a number of actual examples. While the model will not be very helpful to the youth pastor, the overall concept will be. This information has direct application to ministry as the wise speaker should

---

<sup>26</sup> Ross Buck, et al., "Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Affect, Reason, and Involvement in Persuasion: The ARI Model and the CASC Scale," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22 (1995).

learn from this research and take into account the emotional component of his communication.

A journal article that presents data from a scientific experiment designed to test whether media has an effect upon the type of cognition inspired is, "Media Differences in Rational and Emotional Responses to Advertising."<sup>27</sup> In this article two hundred and forty television and magazine articles were presented to a test group of college students and the effect each of the ads had upon them was evaluated. The clear result was that different media produced different psychological outcomes. The electronic media engendered more of an emotional and affective mental response (syncretic cognition) while the print media engendered more of a rational and analytical response (analytic cognition). The conclusion of the article points to the advertising industry's application of this knowledge, specifically that an advertiser should use television to advertise his product if he wants to create an emotional bond to the brand. Conversely, he should use print if he wants to provide logical reasons why the consumer should purchase his product. The article reveals that this actually is the present case as the manufacturers of certain products which are either commodities or lack significant differentiation from their competitors products (food, entertainment, cleaners, gasoline, beer, candy, snacks, and soft drinks) spend five to ten times the amount on advertising in the electronic media than they spend advertising in the print media. This article also introduces four types of learning (systematic learning, heuristic learning, classical conditioning, and

---

<sup>27</sup> Arjun Chaudhuri and Ross Buck, "Media Differences in Rational and Emotional Responses to Advertising," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 39 (Winter 1995).

vicarious learning) and discusses which medium is best suited for each type.

From this study the youth pastor will gain from this study insight into determining which media might be best suited to his message. If he wants to argue facts and reason, then he wants his audience to use systematic learning and he needs to engender rational and analytical involvement with them. He ought to use a logical discourse such as would make sense if printed. If he wants to motivate and inspire his audience to action, or to create affection in them for a subject, then electronic media is well suited for his purpose.

Finally, a work that has garnered much attention in the academic world, and even in the popular media, is a book by Antonio Damasio entitled, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*.<sup>28</sup> This book is a tour de force of neurobiology and the brain's system for generating emotions. It is a fascinating, somewhat difficult work that disproves the modern era's assumptions regarding man's ability to reason in purely logical terms. The newly emerging scientific discoveries regarding the connections between body, emotions, and reason make for fascinating reading and have wide-ranging implications for the Christian communicator, as well as for the philosopher. The reader concludes that Descartes was quite mistaken when he stated, "*Cognito ergo sum*." The essence of man is much more than a disembodied mind that can sit in space and objectively survey the rational landscape. Man is created to be an emotional being and those emotions play an integral part in his cognitive processes. The real-life illustrations of the effects upon the ability to reason and make good,

---

<sup>28</sup> Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Gosset/Putnam, 1994).



logical decisions by people who had damage occur in the emotional centers of their brains is amazing and instructive. The clear implication for the preaching and teaching ministries of the church is that speaking to human emotions must be taken into account. If the church attempts to preach the Gospel as if it was addressing a group of emotionless Vulcans such as Star Trek's Mr. Spock (the quintessential logical modern man), then it may lose in the market place of ideas to false gods possessing better messengers.

### *Visual Media and Cognition*

The effect that visual media can have upon cognition is a broad topic with much diverse research behind it. The complexities and complications associated with studying it, however, make direct application of the results to youth ministry somewhat difficult. It is easier for researchers to publish theories of communication and data indicating trends than it is for youth ministers to translate that information into an effectively designed curriculum.

One article that illustrates this point is David Allan's, "A Phenomenological Perspective on Motion Media: The Iconic Phenomena Communication Model."<sup>29</sup> This article presents a dry and somewhat scrambled discussion of motion media (e.g., film, television, multimedia), communication, emotional responses, and motion media's incorporation into education. Especially valuable is the discussion of the individual parts of motion media and the accumulating influence these can have in influencing the thinking of an individual. The information

---

<sup>29</sup> David W. Allan, "A Phenomenological Perspective on Motion Media: The Iconic Phenomena Communication Model," *International Journal of Instructional Media* 19 (1992).

regarding how a person's reasoning is influenced by factors in the present and also in the past, both tangible and intangible, speaks to some of the modernist and postmodernist conflicts regarding man's ability to be truly objective.

Allan's examination of motion media illustrates the complexity of studying how this mode of communication can influence a person's thinking. He explains that motion media communicates through its use of audile, verbal, visual, and kinesthetic elements. Most every film or multimedia presentation is made up of all of these elements and each element is communicating to the audience. Additionally, they work together symbiotically so that the whole is greater—or at least different—than the sum of the parts. Each member of the audience who receives the message is stimulated differently according to their personal background, experiences, and exposure to these varied elements. This means that one example of multimedia that can be studied will significantly differ from all others. It also means that each recipient's response to a given presentation will vary according to how the various elements of the motion media touch or evoke feeling and understanding out of his reserves of past experiences. These facts suggest that though multimedia has the potential to be a powerful communication tool, the user cannot really be fully aware of the exact message that his audience will be receiving.

An interesting paper that punctures the view that all cognition is reasoned and logical is Paul Messaris', "Analog, Not Digital: Roots of Visual Literacy and

Visual Intelligence.”<sup>30</sup> In this paper the author demonstrates that communication can, of course, take place via symbolic representation such as a spoken or written language. In this case the message is separated into units and represented by arbitrary symbols that bear no direct resemblance to the intended concept. However, communication may also take place via analogical representation, in which case the symbol (e.g., a picture) maintains a direct—and at times, indirect—correspondence with its referent. In this latter case, an image or edited video clip often creates an impression in the mind by analogy without the viewer even being aware that he is being manipulated or influenced. Some of the factors regarding an image’s ability to create an effect upon a viewer’s mind are the image’s composition and its juxtaposition with other images. One of Messaris’ conclusions is that to better master the art of visual communication one must better understand analogical thinking. This is akin to better understanding the use of the metaphor, which is a synonym for Messaris’ term *analog*.

An important paper written by Meadowcroft and Olson entitled, “Television Viewing vs. Reading: Testing Information Processing Assumptions,” examines whether using visual media actually is “dumbing down” the message communicated.<sup>31</sup> This paper presents a most interesting review of the theories and predictions of the differences between the mental processing of television and print media, and then presents and discusses the results of a scientific study

---

<sup>30</sup> Paul Messaris, “Analog, Not Digital: Roots of Visual Literacy and Visual Intelligence,” in *Visual Literacy in the Digital Age. Selected Readings From the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association* (Rochester, NY: October 13-17, 1993).

<sup>31</sup> Jeanne M. Meadowcroft and Beth Olson, *Television Viewing vs. Reading: Testing Information Processing Assumptions*, a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Washington, D.C.: August 9-12, 1995), ERIC, ED 392106.

to test many of those predictions. The study exposed two groups of students to an overview of Chaos theory (from the discipline of physics), one via printed material and the other via a television program. The researchers then tested each group and compared the results. The underlying assumptions were that the television viewers would not expend as much mental effort (A.I.M.E.) as the readers, that they would not process the information as long or as well, resulting in poorer recall and comprehension of the material. The results, however, showed no difference between the two groups in any of these areas, indicating that the multimedia communication was not inferior to print. The clear implication for youth pastors is that they need not fear criticisms that by using multimedia they are not challenging the minds of their kids. This study showed that multimedia communication can be as effective as print in conveying even complex information.

The classic volume to which almost all authors refer regarding visual media and cognition is, *Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning*, by Gavriel Salomon.<sup>32</sup> This work contains much that is beneficial for the youth pastor, and will help him better grasp the concept of communication. In this book Salomon explains how all communication is comprised of symbol systems. Multimedia communication, specifically, is a composite of many symbol systems, all of which are communicating simultaneously. Each symbol system carries with it its own conventions, abilities, and limitations. Salomon demonstrates how a given concept can be better communicated by one symbol system than by another

---

<sup>32</sup> Gavriel Salomon, *Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning* (Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1979).

which is not as well-suited for the purpose. For a different concept, the situation may be reversed. Additionally, not all people cognitively process symbol systems with equal facility. This means that one group of people will understand a given concept better through use of a picture, for example, while another group might comprehend it best through a verbal description. The youth pastor himself may more easily comprehend and articulate a concept through one symbol system, while the majority of his audience may comprehend it more easily through another. Therefore, the youth pastor should consider which symbol system will best express the idea he is trying to communicate, and should consider repeating the same idea using more than one symbol system so as to reach a greater percentage of his audience.

An excellent overview of memory processing and multimedia's effect upon it is Kathy Kellermann's article, "Memory Processes in Media Effects."<sup>33</sup> This is a very technical and lengthy article detailing the nature of memory, the retention of media messages by the memory, methods of improving the retention of media messages, and the implications of memory processes for mass media effects. The introductory section regarding the nature of memory and how it works is very worthwhile reading for those interested in cognition. Likewise the factors indicated for increasing the retention in memory of the media message will be of interest to the youth pastor interested in using visual communication. While this is a very technical subject—and Kellermann's article provides a good survey of the research and of the researchers in the field—it certainly gives perspective to

---

<sup>33</sup> Kathy Kellermann, "Memory Processes in Media Effects," *Communication Research*, 12 (January 1985).

any speaker as to how little of his message is likely to be retained, even if he employs the all of the techniques that Kellermann advocates to enhance memory. Much more will be communicated, received, and retained thorough the long-term observation of a Spirit-filled life than will be through a presentation of any kind. Still, the application of this research will aid a speaker in constructing his message such that his audience will retain more of it. Simply being confronted with this material is helpful to a speaker as it is motivation to begin considering how he may communicate in ways that are easier for his listeners to recall.

Another article regarding visual media and memory is Lang and Friestad's, "Emotion, Hemispheric Specialization, and Visual and Verbal Memory for Television Messages."<sup>34</sup> This article reports and discusses two scientific studies regarding the lateralization of emotion processing by the cerebrum hemispheres. It is fairly technical but the opening discussion defining emotions and how they are processed is very valuable. The thrust of the article is that positive emotional messages and verbal messages are both primarily processed in the left hemisphere of the cerebrum. Negative emotional messages and visual images are primarily processed in the right hemisphere of the cerebrum. Therefore, negative messages are best delivered visually, and positive ones are best delivered verbally. Of greatest importance, however, is the demonstration that incorporating emotion into a message will increase the audience's ability to

---

<sup>34</sup> Annie Lang and Marian Friestad, "Emotion, Hemispheric Specialization, and Visual and Verbal Memory for Television Messages," *Communication Research*, 20 (October 1993).

remember that message. This, of course, has direct implications for the youth pastor (or any speaker) considering how to best convey his message.

There has been an enormous amount written about the effect that long-term television viewing can have upon cognition, especially the cognition of children. Some books have claimed that television has a great deleterious effect and that ministry methods will have to be altered because of this. Other books argue that all of the scientific research demonstrates that there is no significant effect upon cognition. One writer who argues for the former position is William E. Brown. Brown's chapter entitled, "Theology in a Postmodern Culture: Implications of a Video-Dependent Society," is the work that initiated the study culminating in this thesis project.<sup>35</sup> In this chapter Brown throws down the gauntlet in accusing television as a media of influencing the cognition of the generations raised on it and of ushering in postmodern thought. Following the line of reasoning of other writers, Brown says that television (and by extension all multimedia communication) fundamentally differs from print communication. He argues that images are merely recognized while words are cognitively processed, causing children who are long-term television viewers (a whole generation according to Brown) to become deficient in cognitive skills. Brown links this lack of ability to "read intelligently, communicate clearly, and reason morally" to the same tendencies appearing in postmodern thought, and implies

---

<sup>35</sup> William E. Brown, "Theology in a Postmodern Culture: Implications of a Video-Dependent Society," in *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

causation.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, he feels that in a society that is saturated with video images, moral decisions become based upon emotion instead of upon reason. Thus he says that the visual image does not add to language in society, it replaces it. He offers several steps that he believes the church must take to deal with this societal situation in order to remain relevant. Certainly if what Brown says is true then the youth pastor (and the church as a whole) faces a much different audience than it used to a few decades ago. Addressing kids and adults who have short attention spans, an inability to follow a logical argument, and a poor reading skills will demand that lessons, sermons, Sunday school, and Bible study methods be modified.

On the other hand, many researchers argue against the conclusions that Brown (and other similar writers) has articulated. They point to a great body of empirical evidence that refutes these claims regarding television's effect upon cognition.<sup>37</sup> One useful example is Katherine Fite's, *Television and the Brain: A Review*.<sup>38</sup> Fite, a professor in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program of the Department of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has compiled an extensive review of the published scientific research regarding television's effect upon brain development and cognition. She demonstrates that

---

<sup>36</sup> Brown, 162. Brown relies upon the writing of Winn, published 1977, and Bettelheim, published 1963. See Marie Winn, *The Plug-In Drug* (New York: Viking, 1977); Bruno Bettelheim, "Parents vs. Television," *Redbook*, November 1963.

<sup>37</sup> In addition to the three works discussed the reader may also find of interest: Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer, eds. *Handbook of Children and the Media* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001); Daniel R. Anderson and Patricia A. Collins, *The Impact on Children's Education: Television's Impact on Cognitive Development. Working Paper #2*, Office of Education Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. (Washington, D.C.: April 1, 1988), ERIC, ED 295271; Barrie Gunter and Jill L. McAleer, *Children and Television: The One-Eyed Monster?* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>38</sup> Katherine V. Fite, *Television and the Brain: A Review*, paper commissioned by Children's Television Workshop (New York, N.Y.: June 15, 1993), ERIC, ED 372870.



no effect has been indicated or documented by experimental evidence. In fact, she shows that the brain is as active during television viewing as it is during other working activities, including reading. She also shows that television viewing is not primarily a “right brain” activity. Because it includes visual elements, audile elements, and spoken and written language, both hemispheres of the cerebrum are used to interpret the signals received from the screen. Not surprisingly, Fite found that the message (e.g., commercials, sermons, lectures) that generates the greatest degree of brain activity is the message that is best remembered.

Susan Neuman’s book, *Literacy in the Television Age: The Myth of the TV Effect*, tackles the common assertions that reading diminishes literacy among children.<sup>39</sup> Neuman examines published accusations one by one and demonstrates with empirical data that there is no validity in them. Similarly, a book with multiple authors entitled, *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*, examines television’s effect upon literacy and cognition.<sup>40</sup> While this book too covers literacy, it also covers more topics regarding television’s effect upon cognition such as attention span, structure of thought, academic performance, and violent tendencies. Aside from finding a link between violent programming and increased violent tendencies among youth, this book reports no link between television as a medium and altered cognition in children and youth. These two books and Fite’s paper indicate that youth pastors and the church in general should not conclude that their audience

---

<sup>39</sup> Susan B. Neuman, *Literacy in the Television Age: The Myth of the TV Effect*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995).

<sup>40</sup> Aletha C. Huston et al., *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

is substantially different in cognitive ability than it was in the past. That is to say that they can still read, follow logical discourse, and pay attention about as well as a similar group (as defined by having similar I.Q., education, and discipline) from decades ago.

### *Visual Thinking and Education*

The idea that thinking is itself a process that exclusively uses language, and that education should therefore exclusively use language, is now challenged. In his book, *Experiences in Visual Thinking*, Robert McKim demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of visual thinking, which is thought that is not developed verbally but rather is constructed of mental pictures or imaging.<sup>41</sup> From a housewife rearranging the living room furniture to a chess master visualizing a series of moves in a high-level match, McKim demonstrates that people utilize visual thinking in their daily lives. In fact, McKim claims that the human brain is “wired” to think visually in a number of ways. For example, it automatically seeks and recognizes patterns, matches, and symmetry. Many I.Q. tests utilize timed pattern recognition tests that require the observer to pick out a slightly dissimilar object from a group of identical ones, or to select the two identical objects from a group of slightly dissimilar ones. Surprisingly the human brain is faster and more adept at such processing than is a computer. The brain is able to look at the pictures at a glance, holistically, and recognize the patterns while the computer must methodically compare the pictures pixel by pixel.

---

<sup>41</sup> Robert H. McKim, *Experiences in Visual Thinking* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1972).

McKim also demonstrates that some people are capable of mentally picturing even complex mechanical designs such that they can visualize the interaction between the moving parts and anticipate problems and wear. This kind of thinking is nonverbal and based entirely upon image. He gives examples of famous scientists who achieved breakthrough discoveries by mentally picturing their discovery before they could articulate it. More often, however, the discovery process involves an interaction between visual and linguistic thought. The best thinkers, McKim postulates, are those who can nimbly step between various modes of cognition while contemplating a problem. He therefore advocates developing the visual thinking skills of students so as to enhance their cognitive abilities.

Although McKim's work deals mostly with mechanistic visualization, the youth pastor can perhaps find application of his concepts in more abstract ways. While Christian concepts such as faith, hope, and love can be articulated and understood verbally, they may also be comprehended visually. Presenting such concepts both verbally and visually may lead to a more complex and thorough understanding of these concepts, spurring the thinking of the audience to a deeper level as they are invited to conceive of these thoughts on multiple cognitive levels.

In her book, *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Learning*, Barbara Maria Stafford develops the thesis that the modern era ushered in a dominance of the printed word largely to the exclusion of the

visual image.<sup>42</sup> A professor of Art History, Stafford approaches the subject from a pedagogical perspective. In her book she traces the large-scale use of oral-visual teaching methods from the late baroque period through their decline in the enlightenment when textual methods dominated. Finally, she concludes that the postmodern period (which she calls late modernity) will witness a return to the utilization of visual methods of teaching.

In order to trace this movement of thought Stafford uses countless examples of visual apparatus from the baroque period and explains the purpose for which they were used. She explains the educational system of the Jesuits, which relied heavily upon visual stimulation and illustration. She also details how John Locke, once a tutor himself, believed that effective education must be fun and employed “illusionistic tactics of visual persuasion.”<sup>43</sup> She explains that abstract principles, which could not be learned without laborious application, slip easily into the mind when interspersed with interesting experiments and visual aids. Stafford’s purpose in leading the reader through this historical tour of visual teaching methods is to demonstrate that “high order thinking was taught in the construction of visual patterns and that optical technology often boosted the learning process of difficult abstractions.”<sup>44</sup>

Contrasting this positive view of employing visual aids to enhance learning, the modernist period considered mere beholding (of a visual aid) to be akin to mental idleness while reading and writing were considered to demand

---

<sup>42</sup> Barbara Maria Stafford, *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Learning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

<sup>43</sup> Stafford, 49.

<sup>44</sup> Stafford, xxiii.

mental exertion. Hence, the printed text became the dominant emphasis in education, to the exclusion of the visual image. Therefore, it can be deduced that much of the reaction against employing visual media in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church stems from a modernist's prejudice against images, and not from empirical evidence that employing such methods "dumbs down" the message.

In conclusion, the reader will deduce that there are a myriad of issues surrounding the use of computer-generated images in the church for the purpose of communicating visually. Many of these issues are complex and engender substantial disagreement among Christian writers and thinkers. Youth pastors and the church in general will benefit greatly from reading and considering the diversity of issues and opinions that exist before reaching a conclusion as to whether they should incorporate the new visual technologies into their ministries. Having set the stage as to the knowledge that exists regarding the subject, it is now time to focus attention upon this project's experiment, which sought to extend the boundary of that knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROJECT DESIGN**

#### ***The Design and Implementation of the Experiment***

Now that the historical, theological, and empirical context has been established it is time to explain how this project's experiment attempts to expand the boundary of knowledge regarding visual communication in youth ministry. This thesis project was originally designed to conduct a randomized, two by three mixed design experiment (also known as a 2X3 split-plot experiment) to quantitatively establish a benchmark regarding the effect that a multimedia presentation and a still slide presentation can have upon youth pastor's ability to communicate with and persuade youth. Additionally, it sought to quantify the stimulus that a multimedia presentation and a still slide presentation can have upon both the emotions and rational thinking of youth compared to a traditional verbal message. Finally, it compared the reaction youth have toward including these types of visual images in a presentation, measuring their enjoyment, level of attention, and ability to recall specific details of the lesson.

This experiment studied the responses of middle school students who were attending an evangelical Christian conference for middle school students in July of 2005. The students attending the conference came with their youth groups and youth leaders and represented fifteen different churches from six states, comprising a total of about 270 middle school students. The conference ran from Monday through Saturday, and the experiment was administered once

per day on three days of the conference (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday). It was conducted during the seminar slot in the conference's schedule, from three to four in the afternoon. The students were to attend the experiment as they would any of the other seminars, coming directly from outdoor recreation into the classroom.

Eight churches were contacted in advance and asked to select a portion of their students to participate in the experiment. The youth pastors from these churches were asked to randomly send one third of the selected students from their youth group to attend the experiment on each of the days it was conducted. The plan was to assemble three randomly mixed groups of approximately twenty students each.

The same verbal lesson was presented to all three groups of students. This lesson explored the role of God as Judge, Advocate, and Savior in a person's life. It emphasized three basic points. First, that God, as the judge of all men, will hold everyone accountable for their actions and for how they lived their lives using the parable of the minas in Luke 19 as one of its scriptural references. Second, the lesson taught that God loves each individual and seeks to walk through all of life—even the hard parts—with him explaining that the Holy Spirit is the "Counselor" who will remain with him forever. Third, it taught that Jesus is ultimately our Savior and that each person must embrace Him and accept His offer of forgiveness because a holy God cannot just ignore sin. The lesson also intentionally challenged the students to live in obedience to God, to

invite the Lord into every part and aspect of their lives, and to live their life for Jesus knowing that He gave His life for them.

The Tuesday group had this lesson preceded by a multimedia presentation designed to stir their emotions and pique their interest. This presentation was comprised of a five-minute clip from an obscure 1998 commercial film with which it was unlikely that any of the students would be familiar. The scenes in the film depicted an emotionally charged courtroom trial with the judge passing sentence, the imprisonment and the (implied) hanging of the defendant, and the constant support of a friend throughout. The sound and dialogue of the movie was muted and a secular song (recorded in 1997) dealing with the themes of judgment and forgiveness was played concurrently. The multimedia presentation was not introduced or explained, but preceded the verbal lesson which commenced immediately upon the presentation's conclusion. No visual images were utilized during the verbally delivered part of the lesson.

The Wednesday group was not shown the multimedia presentation, but instead heard the same verbal lesson accompanied by thirteen still slides. These slides were still frames taken from the film used in the multimedia presentation and projected upon the screen behind the speaker while he spoke. The slides depicted various pictures of the judge, the defendant, the supportive friend, the prison, and the gallows and were timed to correspond with the lesson so as to visually illustrate the discussion.



The Friday group was not shown any visual images but heard only the verbal message. This group was to serve as the control group with which the results of the other two groups would be compared.

Upon the commencement of each day's experiment the students were read an introductory statement explaining why they were there and what they were to do (Appendix 6 contains this statement). The statement advised the students that attending this experiment was completely voluntary, as was answering the questions on the testing instrument. It instructed them not to write their names anywhere on the forms and assured them of anonymity and confidentiality. At this time each student was handed a pen and a stapled packet of paper with a blank cover sheet. This packet contained the pre-test and the post-test, which comprised the testing instrument. Each page of the packet was coded with a letter/number combination (A-24, for example). The letter identified the day in which the form was completed, and the number identified the student so that if the pages were separated they could be reassembled correctly. The questionnaire was completely anonymous and no record was kept of who was in attendance.

At the appropriate time the students were asked to tear off the cover sheet and to fill out the one-page pre-test, which was labeled "Seminar Evaluation Form, Part 1". Upon completing it they were asked to tear off that page and turn it in. A blank page separated the pre-test from the post-test, and this blank page was now visible. They were asked not to look ahead at the post-test. After receiving all the completed pre-tests, the lesson was commenced. At the

conclusion of the lesson, the students were asked to tear off the blank page on top of their packet and complete the two-page post-test, which was labeled “Seminar Evaluation Form, Part 2”. After all the post-tests were completed they were collected and the students were dismissed to attend the next activity scheduled at the conference.

### ***The Testing Instrument***

As mentioned, the testing instrument (see Appendix 5 for the complete instrument) consisted of a pre-test and a post-test. The one-page pre-test contained ten questions the first five of which were designed to gather demographic data. This data was gathered in order to be able to compare the sample groups so as to determine if there were any significant differences between the groups assembled on the different days that might affect the outcome of the experiment. The demographic data collected indicated each student’s age and upcoming grade in school (only the responses of students of middle school age and grade were used), their state of residence, and the highest level of education of both of their parents.

Aside from acting as a screen to filter out responses that may have been turned in by counselors attending the seminar with their youth, it was important to have the age and grade information so as to eliminate an extraneous variable from the experiment. If, for example, the population of Tuesday’s group was skewed toward younger kids going into sixth grade, while Friday’s group was heavily populated with older kids going into ninth grade, then any variation

between the responses of the two groups might be due to a difference in age and maturity, and not necessarily due to the effect of the intended independent variable (which was the visual element of the lesson).

Similarly, the questions regarding the level of parents' education were included to eliminate another possible unintended variable. Parents' education was considered to be a rough measure of the student's intelligence. The higher the educational level of the parents the higher the expected intelligence of the student. If, for example, Friday's group was determined to have a significantly higher level of intelligence than Wednesday's group then any variation between the responses of the two groups might be due to the difference in intelligence and not due to the visual elements of the presentation.

The question regarding the state of residence was included as a measure of randomness. It was assumed that if the randomization design were carried out properly then there would not be a significant difference in the residential composition of each group. There was not, however, an expectation that students from one state varied significantly from students from another state in any meaningful way that would affect the outcome of the experiment.

The last five questions of the pre-test asked questions intended to determine each student's attitude toward God regarding the various topics that were to be discussed in the lesson. This data was useful for two purposes. First, it allowed the beginning attitudes of the three sample groups to be compared. If, for example, the responses of one group were skewed toward a negative view of God, while another group's were oppositely skewed, then any variance in the

groups' responses in the rest of the testing instrument might be explained by the initial bias and not by the intended independent variable. Second, these questions established a baseline to which the responses of the post-test could be compared to determine what affect the lesson had upon each student. It was assumed that if one day's presentation method better communicated the points of the lesson than another's did then there would be a greater difference between the pre-test and post-test on these questions in that group's results.

The two-page post-test consisted of twenty-three questions for the "Multimedia" and "Still Slide" groups, and twenty-one questions for the "Verbal Lesson Only" group. The additional two questions asked specifically about the visual elements and, therefore, were inappropriate to ask of the last group. Of the twenty-three questions, twenty-one were closed-end questions (multiple-choice), the answers to which could be quantified, averaged, and compared. Only two questions (only one for the "verbal lesson only" group) were open-end questions that asked the students to express their thoughts in their own words.

The first nine questions of the post-test utilized the Likert scale, which asked the students to choose from a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". These questions asked the students to evaluate the lesson in terms of enjoyment, concentration/A.I.M.E. (amount of invested mental energy), stimulation of thinking (including thinking about specific themes of the lesson), emotional impact, and ability to hold their attention. The answers to these questions can be quantified and compared between the sample groups. The tenth question was an open-end question that asked the students to

describe how this lesson affected their emotions. For this question, the answers can be compared but, of course, no quantitative analysis can be made.

The next section of the post-test asked students to respond using a ten-point scale. The first five questions of this section (questions #11-15) were identical to questions #6 through #10 of the pre-test and allow for before and after comparisons both within and between the groups, as described above. The next three questions (#16-18) asked students how determined they were to actually apply the three points of the lesson in their lives. A high desire to do the things that the lesson called them to do is considered to represent a high degree of persuasion. This data allows for an analysis and comparison of the degree of persuasion that each presentation was able to achieve.

The next section of the post-test consisted of three multiple-choice questions (#19, 20, and 21) that asked the students to recall specific items of information from the lesson. One question asked a detail from the parable of the minas in Luke 19, one asked as to the identity of the Counselor in John 14, and the last asked the reason why God cannot simply excuse sin. All these answers were provided in the lesson and these questions were designed to test the groups' ability to recall the information.

As stated, question #22 and #23 were only asked of the groups that had accompanying visual presentations. The first of these asked the students to rate, using a ten-point scale, their enjoyment of having either the projected video or still images accompany the lesson. The last question was an open-end question

that asked them to express what they liked about having the visual elements accompany the lesson.

### ***Expected Outcomes of this Experiment***

As mentioned in the first chapter, this experiment was expected to produce a definitive outcome. A directional hypothesis was constructed, based upon the published research described in Chapter One, that postulated that the mean scores ( $\mu$ ) of the Multimedia Group (Group A) will exceed those of the Verbal Lesson Only Group (Group C) in regard to eight dependent variables.<sup>1</sup>

These dependent variables are:

- 1). Recall of specific lesson content
- 2). Communication of the lesson's points
- 3). A.I.M.E.
- 4). Emotional stimulation
- 5). Stimulation of thinking
- 6). Lesson's ability to hold students' attention
- 7). Enjoyment of the lesson
- 8). Persuasion

Of course these eight dependent variables are independent of one another and it can reasonably be said that Hypothesis One ( $H_1$ ) is really eight separate hypotheses, each of which predicts that  $\mu_A$  will be greater than  $\mu_C$  in regard to each individual dependent variable. A second directional hypothesis, Hypothesis Two ( $H_2$ ), was also constructed. This hypothesis predicted that the mean scores of the Still Slide Group (Group B) will exceed those of the Verbal Lesson Only Group (Group C) in regard to the same eight dependent variables described

---

<sup>1</sup>  $H_1: \mu_A > \mu_C$

above in Hypothesis One.<sup>2</sup> Finally, a third directional hypothesis was constructed, Hypothesis Three ( $H_3$ ), which predicted that with respect to the above-mentioned eight dependent variables, the mean scores of Group A will exceed those of Group B.<sup>3</sup>

The actual empirical results of the experiment will be discussed in the next chapter, Chapter 6, and the data may be viewed in Appendix 1. The results of the statistical analysis of the data may be found in Appendix 2, and the overall implications of the results for youth ministry and for the church at large will be discussed in Chapter 7.

---

<sup>2</sup>  $H_2: \mu_B > \mu_C$

<sup>3</sup>  $H_3: \mu_A > \mu_B$

## CHAPTER 6

### OUTCOMES

Having discussed at length the body of research relevant to the use of visual images, the complicated historical and theological factors regarding their use, and the design and the expected outcomes of the experiment, it is time to address the experiment's results and findings. The data from the experiment will be presented followed by a discussion of the statistical analysis that was applied to the data and the statistical results. There will also be a chronicling of the problems and external factors that arose during the experiment that could potentially have affected the data. Finally, a discussion of the conclusions that can be drawn from the experiment will be presented along with suggestions for future research.

#### ***Experimental Data***

The experiment was conducted as planned during the seminar time slot of the Christian conference in July 2005. Due to unexpected factors, which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, more students than expected participated on two of the days during which the experiment was conducted. The total number of participants completing both the pre-test and the post-test, and also fitting the age and grade criteria, was eighty-five. The Multimedia Group, Group A, consisted of thirty-three students; the Still Slide Group, Group B, consisted of thirty-two students; and the Verbal Only Group, Group C, consisted of twenty students.



The mean results and standard deviations for each group for each quantifiable question are displayed in Appendix 1, Part A, and an abbreviated summary of the mean results of the post-test is displayed below in Table 6.<sup>1</sup> A striking pattern is evident which is consistent with Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Three. Namely that the mean of the Multimedia Group exceeds that of both the Verbal Only Group (which served as the control) and the Still Slide Group on every question of the post-test. Also notable is the fact that the means for the Verbal Only Group exceed the means for the Still Slide Group for twice as many questions as they are exceeded by the Still Slide means. This, of course, is not consistent with Hypothesis 2, which predicted that the Still Slide Group would outperform the Control Group.

**Table 6**  
**Mean Results for the Post-Test**

		<b>Group A Multimedia</b>	<b>Group B Still Slide</b>	<b>Group C Verbal Only</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
<b>Question</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
P1	Enjoyment	4.06	3.56	3.50	A>B>C
P2	A.I.M.E.	3.79	2.90	3.55	A>C>B
P3	Thinking	4.55	3.78	4.10	A>C>B
P4	Thinking	4.33	4.06	3.95	A>B>C
P5	Thinking	4.21	3.91	3.90	A>B>C
P6	Thinking	4.39	4.13	4.20	A>C>B
P7	Thinking	4.33	3.38	3.65	A>C>B
P8	Emotion	3.73	2.75	3.00	A>C>B
P9	Attention	3.93	3.03	3.50	A>C>B
P16	Persuasion	8.87	7.97	8.40	A>C>B
P17	Persuasion	8.77	8.44	8.20	A>B>C
P18	Persuasion	9.23	8.87	8.95	A>C>B
P22	Liked Visuals	8.84	7.34	N/A	A>B

---

<sup>1</sup> The mean is the arithmetic average of all of the data for a given question. The standard deviation is a measure of the breadth of the distribution of the data. The bigger the standard deviation, the larger the diversity of answers for a given question.

This data indicates that regarding six of the dependent variables for which the experiment was measuring (namely A.I.M.E./concentration, emotional stimulation, stimulation of thought, attention, enjoyment, and persuasion) the inclusion of the multimedia element had a positive effect. On the other hand, the addition of the still slide visual element did not have a uniformly positive effect. In fact, it would appear that it had more of a deleterious effect as it under-performed the Control Group in terms of concentration/A.I.M.E., attention, and emotional stimulation. The Still Slide Group split with the Verbal Only Group in regard to the questions focusing upon stimulation of thought. The means for Group B exceeded Group C for two out of five questions regarding this dependent variable, albeit by a tiny amount. Group B's mean scores exceeded those of Group C's for questions P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>5</sub>, which asked about how much the lesson stimulated thought regarding God's help in hard times and the need for forgiveness, respectively. Group C's mean scores exceeded Group B's scores for questions P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>6</sub>, and P<sub>7</sub>. These questions asked about how much the lesson stimulated thought regarding God's justice, God's love, and provocation of thought in general. The two groups likewise split on the questions determining persuasion. (P<sub>16</sub>, P<sub>17</sub>, and P<sub>18</sub>), The Verbal Only Group exceeded the Still Slide Group in questions P<sub>16</sub> and P<sub>18</sub>, which asked how determined the students are to do what is right and how determined they are to live for Christ, respectively. The Still Slides group outscored the Verbal Only Group for question P<sub>17</sub>, which asked which asked how determined the students are to invite Jesus into all aspects of

their lives. The only dependent variable for which the Still Slide Group clearly exceeded the Verbal Only Group was in enjoyment of the lesson ( $P_1$ ).

The post-test asked three questions to test the students' ability to recall specific information given in the lesson. The sums of the results are displayed in Appendix 1, Part C. The Multimedia Group had an error rate of 8.6%, while the Still Slide Group had an error rate of 15.6%, and the Verbal Only Group had an error rate of 15.0%. These results are also consistent with Hypotheses One and Three, which predicted that Group A would have a better recall of the material than either Group B or C. The data does not appear to support Hypothesis Two, however, as Group B again under-performed the Control Group.

The same five questions ( $Q_6$ - $Q_{10}$  and  $P_{11}$ - $P_{15}$ ) were asked in both the pre-test and the post-test in part to determine what effect the lesson had upon each student. It was expected that the better the lesson communicated its content to the students then the greater the variance there would be between the answers given in the post-test and those initially given in the pre-test. The results are displayed in Appendix 1, Part B, and are summarized below in Table 7. In this case no clear pattern is evident. The Multimedia Group, Group A, did not consistently outscore the other two groups in regard to the lesson's level of communication as it had for the other dependent variables. For these individual questions the rank orders of the three groups were as mixed as they could possibly be, implying no clear effect of the independent variable. This result implies that in this experiment visual elements did not affect (positively or negatively) the lesson's ability to communicate its main points. On the other

hand, looking at the sum of the differences shows a clear separation. Group A's score was more than 40% greater than the other groups demonstrating that for those areas for which the multimedia presentation communicated better, it communicated much better.

**Table 7**  
**Mean Differences Between Pre-Test & Post-Test, P<sub>11-15</sub> to Q<sub>6-10</sub>**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Group A Multimedia</b>	<b>Group B Still Slide</b>	<b>Group C Verbal Only</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
P11-Q6	1.758	0.906	1.600	A>C>B
P12-Q7	0.394	0.406	0.400	B>C>A
P13-Q8	0.303	0.375	0.400	C>B>A
P14-Q9	0.545	0.563	0.300	B>A>C
P15-Q10	0.613	0.323	-.150	A>B>C
Total	3.613	2.573	2.550	A>B>C

The other questions of the pre-test, Q<sub>1</sub>-Q<sub>5</sub>, collected demographic data. The results of these questions are displayed in Appendix 1, Part C (except for Q<sub>1</sub>, which is in Part A). This data shows very similar distributions between all three groups for age, grade, and parental educational levels. This is a positive indication that the groups consisted of equivalent samples of students regarding important external factors that might otherwise have affected the outcome of the experiment. It will be noted, however, that the distribution of the states of residence between the three groups is imbalanced. Due to factors that will be discussed later in this chapter the plan for complete randomization of the students was shown to be unsuccessful, as illustrated by this dissimilar distribution of states.

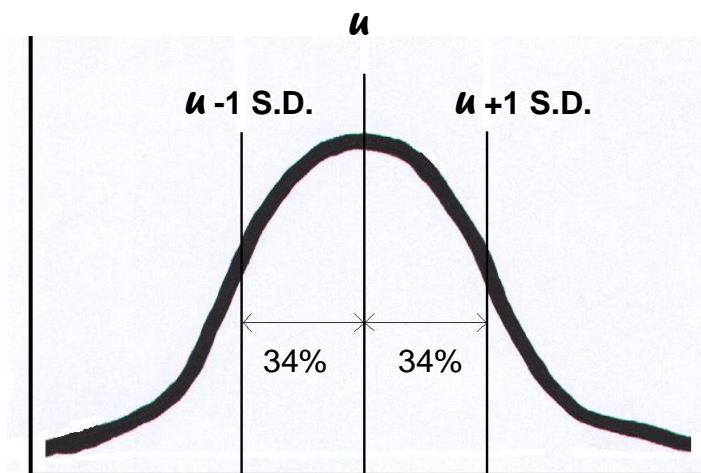
The students' answers to the open-end questions, P<sub>10</sub> and P<sub>23</sub>, are recorded in Appendix 3. It should be observed that although question P<sub>10</sub> asked the students to express how the lesson affected their emotions, most took the liberty to describe any way that the lesson affected or inspired them. Few actually commented upon its emotional impact. Of course this makes drawing any helpful conclusions impossible. Their comments make for interesting reading, however, as one is always struck by the diversity of responses and thoughts that the same lesson inspires in a group. One might note, however, that of the twelve students who directly stated that the lesson did not affect their emotions, six came from the Verbal Only Group, four from the Still Slide Group, and only two from the Multimedia Group. Of those making specific comments about how the lesson affected their emotions, three came from the Multimedia Group, one from the Still Slide Group, and none from the Verbal Only Group.

Most of the students from the Multimedia and the Still Slide Groups apparently did not understand that P<sub>23</sub> was asking what they liked about the visual images accompanying the lesson, and wrote about what they liked (or disliked) about the lesson as a whole. It is interesting to observe, however, the number of students who did say that the visuals helped them to pay attention and added to their understanding of the material presented.

### ***The Meaning of Statistical Interpretation***

Although the data from the experiment would seem to prove that Hypotheses One and Three hold true for seven of the eight dependent variables,

a statistical analysis must be conducted to determine whether this is in fact true. A number of inferential statistical tests must be applied to the data in order to rule out random chance as an explanation for the differences in the results between the experimental groups. These tests assume that if a very large data sample were taken from the population then the results would produce a Normal Curve (also known as a Bell Curve) as shown in Figure 3. Note that the Normal Curve is symmetric around  $\mu$ , its mean (therefore 50% of the population lies above the mean and 50 % lies below), and that the curve's inflection points—where the curvature changes direction from concave to convex—occur at the mean plus or minus one standard deviation (S.D.). Mathematically it works out that 34.13% of the population lies between the mean plus or minus one standard deviation ( $\mu + 1 \text{ S.D.}$  or  $\mu - 1 \text{ S.D.}$ ).<sup>2</sup>



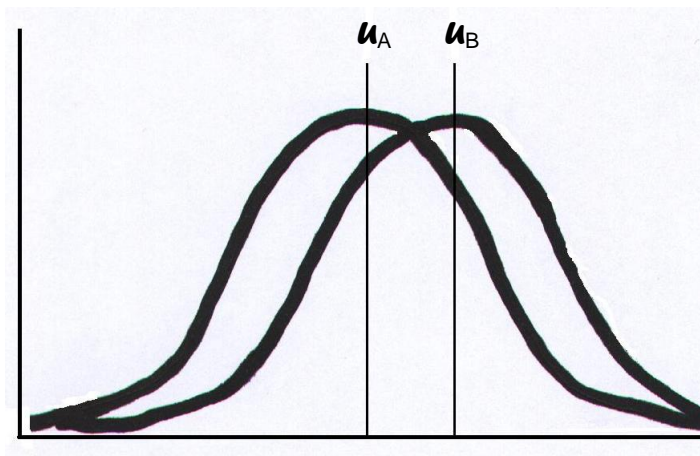
**Figure 3. The Normal Curve.**

---

<sup>2</sup> Robert R. Pagano, *Understanding Statistics in the Behavioral Sciences* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001), 88.

If the data from an experiment is quite varied, the value of the standard deviation will increase and the width of the curve will broaden. If there is not much variation in the data then the standard deviation will be small and the curve will be tall and thin.

The data from this experiment, when comparing Group A to Group C, or Group A to Group B, for seven out of the eight dependent variables, generates two curves that are roughly illustrated in Figure 4. The question to be answered is whether the data generating these curves comes from two different populations, or really represents the uneven results of random sampling of a single population. In other words, is the difference between the means of the Multimedia Group and the Verbal Only Group (and also the Still Slide Group) because the multimedia presentation had a real effect, or is the difference due to random chance?



**Figure 4. Two Normal Curves with Different Means.**

An illustration will help to clarify this concept. If it were possible to measure the I.Q. of every person in the U.S., a normal distribution such as in Figure 3 would be formed. If an experimenter hypothesized that youth pastors in New England were more intelligent than the general population (who could doubt it?) then he might randomly select thirty youth pastors in New England and measure their I.Q.'s. Suppose this were done and the data generated two curves such as in Figure 4, with the mean I.Q. of the youth pastors ( $\mu_B$ ) exceeding that of the general population ( $\mu_A$ ). This might prove the experimental hypothesis. It is conceivable, however, that if instead of a thirty-member sample, all youth pastors in New England were tested, the results might show that there is no difference between the I.Q. distribution of the youth pastors and that of the general population. The difference between the thirty-member sample and the general population was due to the random chance inherent in the selection process. That is to say that by chance thirty youth pastors were selected whose average I.Q. was higher than the general population's, thus skewing the results. This alternative explanation for the difference in the data between groups, that is that the result is due to chance, is called the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). It always contradicts the experimental Hypothesis ( $H_E$ ), which claims that the independent variable is responsible for the apparent effect.

It is imaginable that in any test sample the results might be similarly skewed by chance selection, making absolute certainty impossible. By analyzing the characteristics of the distribution created by the data, inferential statistical tests seek to obtain a probability that any difference in the results is due to a true



effect of the independent variable and not due to chance. Therefore, while it is impossible to say that the results of an experiment definitively prove  $H_E$ , it is possible through the application of inferential statistical analysis to say, for example, that it is 95% probable that the independent variable caused the measured effect. This level of probability is called the confidence level, and a critical threshold of 95% is frequently used.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, if the statistical tests show that there is less than a 5% chance of  $H_0$  being true (and therefore a 95% chance of  $H_E$  being true) then  $H_0$  can be ruled out and  $H_E$  demonstrated. If there is less than a 95% chance of  $H_E$  being the cause of the effect, then  $H_0$  cannot be ruled out. The experiment did not have definitive results.

Three obvious factors influence the ease with which an experiment may reach the 95% confidence level. First is the size of the effect. If the means of the curves for the experimental group and the control group are far apart, showing a great effect for the independent variable, then the critical level of confidence is easily met. Second is the variance of the data. If the standard deviations of the data for the two groups are small, then the curves will be narrow, reducing their overlap even if their means are not far apart. This helps to separate the curves and achieve the critical confidence level with less of a separation between the means. Lastly is the sample size of the experiment. Even a very small effect of an independent variable can be demonstrated to exceed the critical threshold if the sample size is large. This is because as the sample size increases, the odds of a skewing of the data due to a bias created by unrepresentative sample selection decreases rapidly.

---

<sup>3</sup> Pagano, 219.

The inferential statistical tests that were used to analyze this experiment's data were the Chi Square Test, the One-Way Analysis of Variance Test (ANOVA), the Tukey HSD Test, the Paired Samples T-Test, and the A Priori Comparison Independent Groups T-Test. These tests will each be explained as necessary during the discussion of the analysis of the data. The results for all of these tests and their significances are displayed in Appendix 2.

### ***Statistical Interpretation of the Data***

As discussed previously, the first five questions of the pre-test sought to discover if there were any significant differences demographically between the experiment's sample groups. The first question,  $Q_1$ , asked the age of each student. It might be hypothesized that any differences in the data collected in the post-test could be due to differences in age (and, hence, maturity) if there were a significant difference in the ages of the sample groups. The means are similar for Group A, B, and C (12.73, 12.84, and 12.80 years, respectively), but are they similar enough to rule out the possible effect of age upon the experiment? A One-Way Analysis of Variance Test (ANOVA) was conducted on the numerical data gained from  $Q_1$ . This test divides the variance between the groups by the variance within the groups to calculate a value for the statistical figure  $F_{obt}$ . Obviously  $F_{obt}$  must be greater than 1.0 for the value to be of any significance, since a value of less than 1.0 indicates more variation within each group than there is variation between the groups.  $F_{obt}$  must also be greater or equal to ( $\geq$ ) the value of  $F_{crit}$  in order to exceed the 95% confidence level. The computer

program used for much of these statistical calculations converts the comparison of  $F_{\text{obt}}$  and  $F_{\text{crit}}$  into a Sig. value. The Sig. value must be less than or equal to ( $\leq$ ) 0.05 (5%) for the experimental results to exceed the 95% confidence level. The ANOVA results for  $Q_1$  are shown in Appendix 2, Part A.  $F_{\text{obt}}$  was calculated to be 0.115, which is much less than 1.0 (note that the Sig. value was 0.892, much greater than 0.05) meaning that there was much less difference between the groups than there was within each group. Therefore, the three groups represent three equivalent samples taken from one population in respect to age. Stated another way, grade is unrelated to group.

Questions  $Q_2$  through  $Q_5$  asked for data that cannot be quantified, and therefore the ANOVA test could not be used. A non-parametric test developed to compare nominal data known as the Chi Square Test was utilized. This test is based upon a comparison of the frequency of answers in the mutually exclusive categories defined in the pre-test. It calculates a value for  $\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$  and compares it to the value of  $\chi^2_{\text{crit}}$ . If  $\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$  is greater than or equal to  $\chi^2_{\text{crit}}$ , then there is at least a 95% certainty that the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) can be ruled out and that the independent variable is responsible for the demonstrated effect. In Appendix 2, Part B, the results for all of the Chi Square tests are displayed. Note that for  $Q_2$ ,  $Q_4$ , and  $Q_5$  the values for  $\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$  are well below the  $\chi^2_{\text{crit}}$  values. This means that in respect to grade, father's educational level, and mother's educational level, the three groups represent three equivalent samples taken from one population. These factors are unrelated to group. In regard to state of residence, however, the result for  $Q_3$  shows that  $\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$  is well above  $\chi^2_{\text{crit}}$  (49.926 and 18.307,

respectively) meaning that the groups are not evenly drawn from the same population. The state of residence of the students is related to group.

The last five questions of the pre-test assessed the pre-existing attitudes of the students toward some of the concepts that were to be discussed in the lesson. As discussed earlier, if there was a great difference between the groups in this regard on the pre-test this might have an influence on the final result of the experiment. An ANOVA analysis demonstrates that for all of these questions,  $Q_6$  to  $Q_{10}$ , the  $F_{obt}$  values are well below  $F_{crit}$ , and, hence, the corresponding Sig. values well above 0.05. In fact, for  $Q_6$  through  $Q_9$ , the  $F$  values are well below 1.0. Therefore, it can be confidently stated that there is not a significant difference between the three sample groups in terms of their pre-existing attitudes toward the material in the lesson.

The first question of the post-test,  $P_1$ , asked the students to evaluate how much they enjoyed the lesson. The means for the three groups differed such that  $A > B > C$  (see Table 6). An ANOVA analysis was conducted to discover if there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in regard to their enjoyment of the lesson, or if the difference could be explained by chance factors. The ANOVA test calculated an  $F_{obt}$  value of 5.854, well above  $F_{crit}$ , and yielding a Sig. value of 0.004, well below the 0.05 threshold. There was a significant difference between the groups. However, since there are three groups being compared, the ANOVA analysis does not indicate where that difference exists. It could potentially be that each group was significantly different from the other two, or that only one specific group was significantly

different from the other two, which were not significantly different from each other. The One-Way ANOVA test is unable distinguish between these scenarios. Therefore another test, the Tukey HSD Test, was utilized.

The Tukey HSD Test compares each group against every other group one at a time. Appendix 2, Part C displays the Tukey HSD results for all of the questions for which it was used. This test calculates a  $Q_{obt}$  value and compares it with  $Q_{crit}$ . If  $Q_{obt}$  is greater than or equal to  $Q_{crit}$ , then the corresponding Sig. value will be less than or equal to 0.05 and there will be at least a 95% confidence level of a significant difference existing between these two groups. For  $P_1$ , the calculated Sig. value for the A to C comparison was 0.014 and Sig. value for the A to B comparison was 0.012. Both of these values are well less than 0.05 indicating that there was a significant difference between Multimedia Group and the other two groups in regard to their enjoyment of the lesson. The B to C comparison yielded a Sig. value of 0.946, well above the 0.05 value indicating that there was not a significant difference between the Still Slide Group and the Verbal Only Group in terms of enjoyment.

The Tukey HSD Test seeks to compare all possible combination of groups while maintaining at 95% the overall experiment's probability of  $H_0$  not being the cause of the effect. Due to the laws of probability, this means that for each individual comparison, the chance of incorrectly keeping  $H_0$  must be higher than 95%, which means there is an increased error of incorrectly rejecting  $H_E$ . To check for this an A Priori Independent Groups T-Test was used. This test makes the same comparison as the Tukey HSD Test, but does not correct for the

increased chance of error in rejecting  $H_0$  because of multiple comparisons.

Therefore for any given two-way comparison, the chance of incorrectly rejecting  $H_0$  is kept less than or equal to 5%. Many statisticians believe that when doing a priori comparisons that “flow meaningfully and logically from the experimental design and are few in number” the T-Test is appropriate to use.<sup>4</sup> The T-Test calculates a value for  $T_{obt}$  and compares it to (in this case a two-tailed) value for  $T_{crit}$ .<sup>5</sup> If  $T_{obt}$  is greater than or equal to  $T_{crit}$ , then there is a significant difference between the two groups being compared. For question  $P_1$ , the T-Test needed only be applied to the B to C comparison (the higher threshold of the Tukey test already validated the A to C and A to B comparisons). The  $T_{obt}$  value for  $P_1$  was found to be 0.321, much less than the  $T_{crit}$  value of 1.988. Therefore, according to both the Tukey Test and the T-Test there is not a significant difference between the Still Slide Group and the Verbal Only Group in terms of enjoyment of the lesson.

Question  $P_2$  asked how hard the students concentrated during the lesson, an intended measure of A.I.M.E. The mean results differed such that  $A > C > B$ . An ANOVA analysis calculated a Sig. value of 0.001, less than the 0.05 threshold. There was a significant difference between the groups in regard to their concentration. A Tukey HSD Test was conducted to define that difference. For the A to B comparison, this test calculated a Sig. value of 0.001, and for the B to C comparison, a Sig. value of 0.039. Since both of these values are less

---

<sup>4</sup> Pagano, 379.

<sup>5</sup> In regard to the Multimedia Group, a good argument could be made that a one-tailed T value should be used since there is a large body of research indicating that Group A will differ from the control group only on the right hand side (positive) of the curve. A conservative, 2-tailed approach is used throughout this project, however. See Pagano, 274, 295, 527.

than 0.05, there was a significant increase in concentration in both the Multimedia Group and the Verbal Only Group in comparison with the Still Slide Group. The A to C comparison, however, yielded a Sig. value of 0.623, well above the 0.05 threshold. A T-Test was conducted on the A to C comparison and it found a  $T_{\text{obt}}$  value of 0.930, less than the  $T_{\text{crit}}$  value of 1.988. Therefore, although the mean concentration value for the Multimedia Group exceeded that of the Verbal Only Group (3.79 to 3.55, respectively) it did not meet the 95% confidence level needed to rule out  $H_0$ .

Questions  $P_3$  through  $P_6$  asked the students how much the lesson got them thinking about specific aspects discussed in the talk.  $P_3$  asked how much it stimulated them to think about God's justice,  $P_4$  about God's help in hard times,  $P_5$  about the need for forgiveness,  $P_6$  about God's love for them.  $P_7$  asked how much the lesson stimulated them to think in general. Once again, Group A outscored both other groups in all questions. An ANOVA analysis, however, revealed that there was a significant difference between the groups for only  $P_3$  and  $P_7$  (see Appendix 2, Part A). A Tukey Test showed that for  $P_3$  the results for Group A were significantly higher than those for Group B, but that there was not a statistically significant difference between Groups A and C, or Groups B and C. T-Tests yielded the same results. For  $P_7$ , the Tukey Test showed that the results for Group A were significantly higher than those for Groups B and C. Group C, despite having results with a higher mean, was not statistically significantly higher than Group B's results. A T-Test also confirmed this. Therefore, the Multimedia presentation can only be concluded to have definitively

caused increased thinking in general and, specifically, thinking about God's justice when compared to the Still Slide Group.

If all of the thinking questions for each group are treated as a single measurement, and their values summed, three new curve are produced with means such that  $A > C > B$ . In this case an ANOVA analysis demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the groups as  $F_{obt}$  is calculated to be 6.425, much larger than  $F_{crit}$ 's value of 3.11. Tukey HSD Tests conclude that the difference between Group A and Group B is significant, however the differences between A and C, and B and C are not statistically significant. It will be noted, however, that the value for  $Q_{obt}$  is quite close to the value for  $Q_{crit}$  (3.37 and 3.38, respectively) for the A to C comparison. A T-Test calculates the  $T_{obt}$  is greater than  $T_{crit}$  ( $2.5 > 1.988$ ) for the A to C comparison. Thus, according to the T-Test, the multimedia presentation did create a statistically significant effect in regard to summed measure of stimulation of thinking in comparison to the Control Group. This is a rare case in which, for the reasons discussed above, the conclusion of the T-test contradicts those of the Tukey HSD Test.

Question  $P_8$  asked the students how much the lesson affected their emotions. An ANOVA analysis of the results shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the sample groups. A Tukey HSD Test reveals that Group A had a significantly higher level of emotional stimulation than did Groups B and C. However, Group B and C did not differ statistically significantly in this regard. A T-Test confirmed this result.



Question P<sub>9</sub> asked the students to evaluate how well the lesson held their attention. The mean results followed a common pattern such that  $A > C > B$ . It will be noted that the means are almost exactly evenly spaced between the groups (3.93, 3.50, and 3.03, respectively). An ANOVA analysis of the results shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups. A Tukey HSD Test reveals that the multimedia presentation held the attention of Group A at a significantly higher level than the Still Slide presentation held Group B's attention. It did not hold it at a significantly higher level than the verbal lesson held Group C's, though. Group C was also not significantly higher than Group B. T-Tests confirmed this result. Thus, one of the complications of statistics is exposed. While it may not be concluded that Group A is of a different population than Group C (thus,  $A = C$ ), and it may not be concluded that Group C is of a different population than Group B (thus,  $C = B$ ), it may be concluded that Group A is of a different population than Group B (thus,  $A \neq B$ ).

Post-test questions P<sub>11</sub> through P<sub>15</sub> correspond with pre-test questions Q<sub>6</sub> through Q<sub>10</sub>. Therefore the answers to P<sub>11</sub> through P<sub>15</sub> need to be compared to the answers of Q<sub>6</sub> through Q<sub>10</sub> within each group, and the difference in answers between each corresponding question of P<sub>11</sub> through P<sub>15</sub> and Q<sub>6</sub> through Q<sub>10</sub> need to be compared between the groups. Appendix 2, Part D displays the results for the Paired Samples T-Tests, which, for each student within each group, compares the results for each post-test question with the results of its corresponding pre-test question. The T-Test determines if there is a statistically significant difference between the answers given before and after the lesson for

each group. It can be seen in Appendix 2 that when the three sample groups are treated as one combined group, the lesson had a statistically significant effect. That is to say that the lesson significantly communicated all of the measured principles contained therein. This is evident because all of the Sig. values for  $Q_6/P_{11}$  through  $Q_{10}/P_{15}$  are less than 0.05.

When each group is analyzed singularly, however, the results are not as clear-cut. According to the T-Test, in Group A the concepts measured in  $Q_6/P_{11}$ ,  $Q_9/P_{14}$ , and  $Q_{10}/P_{15}$  were significantly communicated, but not those measured in  $Q_7/P_{12}$  and  $Q_8/P_{13}$ . In Group B the concepts measured in  $Q_6/P_{11}$  and  $Q_9/P_{14}$  were significantly communicated, but not those measured in  $Q_7/P_{12}$ ,  $Q_8/P_{13}$ , and  $Q_{10}/P_{15}$ . In Group C the concepts measured in  $Q_6/P_{11}$ ,  $Q_8/P_{13}$ , and  $Q_9/P_{14}$  were significantly communicated, but not those measured in  $Q_7/P_{12}$  and  $Q_{10}/P_{15}$ .

Another statistical anomaly will be noted here. In  $Q_7/P_{12}$ , when all the groups are lumped together as a single group, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test answers. Yet when the groups are separated and treated individually, not a single group boasts a significant change. The obvious question is how can this be? The answer lies in the fact that when the groups are treated as a single unit, the sample size is high (85). When each group is analyzed alone, the sample size is much lower (33, 32, and 20). Thus, with a smaller sample size, a larger effect is needed to cross the 95% confidence level threshold.

Examining the raw data gives additional insight as to why the groups had difficulty crossing the confidence threshold in regard to communication.

Appendix 1, Part D displays the frequency of the students who circled the maximum score of “10” for questions Q<sub>6</sub> through Q<sub>10</sub>. Note that with the exception of Q<sub>6</sub>, approximately 50% of all students chose the maximum score in the pre-test. This meant that for each group, any possible measurable effect would be cut in half, as having chosen the maximum score, half the students had no higher choice to make even if the lesson powerfully affected them. Therefore the apparent effect of the independent variable upon the data is by necessity small. It is noteworthy that for the question for which a low percentage of students chose the maximum score in the pre-test (Q<sub>6</sub>; How close do you feel to God at this moment?), all of the groups demonstrated that significant communication occurred during the lesson (A>C>B).

An ANOVA analysis was conducted for questions P<sub>11</sub> through P<sub>15</sub> to determine if there are any significant differences between the groups. The Sig. value for each question exceeded 0.05, indicating that the groups are not significantly different from one another in their attitudes toward the measurable concepts taught in the lesson. Because the groups tested equivalently both in the pre-test and in the post-test, it has to be concluded that the presentation methods had equal effect in general in regard to communication. Even if the difference between the answers for each question on the pre-test and post-test (Q<sub>6-11</sub>/P<sub>11-15</sub>) are totaled, an ANOVA analysis yields an F<sub>obt</sub> value of less than 1.0 (0.540) indicating a statistically insignificant difference in overall communication of the lesson between the groups.

The three questions that measured persuasion,  $P_{16}$ ,  $P_{17}$ , and  $P_{18}$ , each produced three curves in which the mean of Group A exceeded the other two. An ANOVA analysis demonstrated, however, that there was not enough separation between the groups to significantly conclude that the presentation method had an effect upon persuasion. All of the Sig. values exceeded 0.05. Even when the results were summed, and the results of the three questions treated as one, the ANOVA Test did not demonstrate a statistically significant difference between the groups.

Questions  $P_{19}$ ,  $P_{20}$ , and  $P_{21}$  attempted to measure recall of specific content mentioned in the lessons. A Chi Square Test was conducted on the combined results of these three questions. Although the Multimedia Group had approximately half the error rate of the other two groups, the Chi Square Test calculated that the difference was not enough to be considered statistically significant. Therefore method of presentation cannot be firmly concluded to be the cause of the difference in the data.

Finally, question  $P_{22}$  asked the students of both the Multimedia Group and the Still Slide Group to rate how much they liked having the visual elements accompany the lesson. An ANOVA analysis showed a statistically significant difference between the answers of the two groups. Group A liked having the multimedia presentation a significant degree more than Group B liked having the still slides.

### ***External Factors Potentially Affecting the Experiment***

The statistical tests discussed above differentiate between the potential effect of chance selection and the potential effect of the independent variable. There are, of course, a myriad of external factors that potentially might affect the experiment. Some of these the experimenter can discover, and some it is impossible to ever know, especially when surveying middle school students. During this experiment a number of factors arose that need to be discussed.

The first factor to be mentioned directly affected the planned randomization of the sample selection. As explained earlier, this experiment was conducted in the context of a Christian youth conference. Unfortunately, the seminar coordinator, who was responsible for organizing the seminar choices, arranging for the details, and directing the smooth flow of this part of the conference, announced his inability to attend the week before the conference. Further, not as many seminar teachers were arranged for as had been expected by the conference planning team. This problem, for the overall benefit of the conference, required the experiment's lesson to be opened to all kids as a regular seminar. Because all kids attending the conference were required to attend seminars, each of the few available seminars had to have every seat in its room filled to accommodate the full number of attendees.

Additionally, the seminar time slot immediately followed large group recreation, which required almost the entire camp staff to run. Without a seminar coordinator to facilitate the transition from recreation to seminars, the available staff had to run ahead of the crowd of kids to try to beat them to the classrooms

and organize the flow of students through the building. The first day (Tuesday) was almost pandemonium, a situation that improved as the week progressed. On Tuesday, most of the kids rushed for the seminar that they felt would be most interesting, which on Tuesday was the one on girl/boy relationships. When this seminar filled to capacity, the door was closed and the vast majority of the students filtered into other seminars, each one closing its door when it filled to capacity. Therefore, on Tuesday most students ended up in a seminar that they did not originally set out to attend.

This affected the experiment by filling it with more and different students than had been anticipated. Some students who had been expecting to attend on Tuesday were unable to get in, and some who had no idea what they had chosen were in attendance. Further, the nature of the large group recreation placed the students into teams and spread the teams into different parts of the campus. Therefore, when the recreation time ended, some teams (which were made up of whole church groups) were very close to the seminar building while others were relatively distant. This meant that the popular seminars filled with those church youth group members who happened to be stationed close by, while those further away had to settle for seminars that were not seemingly as desirable. This explains why there is not a better mixing of the students in regard to their state of residence. However, it is unlikely that the groups' dissimilarity in the frequency distributions of the state of residence would have any impact on the experiment's results. All the other demographic information demonstrated that

the groups were equivalent in make-up in regard to the factors that realistically might influence the outcome.

On Friday, exactly half of the camp was occupied by a large recreation event at seminar time, reducing the available number of kids. This explains the substantial drop in attendance on Friday (which was the day Group C met) in relation to Tuesday and Wednesday. This had the unfortunate effect of reducing the sample size and making it harder to achieve a 95% confidence level.

Some further factors need to be considered. The Multimedia Group met on Tuesday, which was the first day of the conference. As it was the first day, the students were very excited and going through the schedule for the first time, which added to the confusion. Also, that afternoon the temperature was quite nearly 100 degrees F., and the kids were entering an air-conditioned building after ninety minutes of outdoor recreation. As a group they were louder and more excited than the other two groups were on their respective days. Friday's group, which met on the final day of the conference, was the quietest and probably the most fatigued. Wednesday's recreation involved swimming in the pond and while the girls were able to change into dry clothes before the seminar, the boys came into the seminar directly from the pond and wet.

Complicating Tuesday's rendition of the lesson was a problem with the sound system in the room. The equipment had been set up in advance and checked, but in the absence of excited youth the volume slide was not fully tested. On Tuesday during the multimedia presentation it was found that the volume in the room would not rise to a suitable level to give the presentation the

intended feel of a music video. Some of the students chatted through it, not giving it their full attention and distracting others. On Wednesday, after the experiment was completed for the day, the Group B students were allowed to watch the multimedia presentation for their entertainment and to create discussion (for the purpose of their spiritual benefit, not relating to the experiment). The volume problem had been rectified and the room was filled with sound. No students spoke because it would have been too difficult for them to be heard. There was a noticeable increase in the attention that was paid to the multimedia presentation compared with that given it the day before. It captured the students' attention and moved some to tears, which did not happen on Tuesday.

In retrospect it is difficult to say what affect these factors may have had upon the outcome of the experiment. It is very likely that the confusion, excitement, heat, and volume problem may have decreased the scores of Tuesday's Multimedia Group. It is also likely that the fatigue of a week at camp may have reduced the scores of the Verbal Only Group on Friday. On the other hand, Friday's smaller class size might have worked to increase the effectiveness of the lesson, as there is a frequently claimed inverse relationship between class size and learning (although this claim has recently been disputed).<sup>6</sup> Sitting in damp clothes might have distracted the boys during Wednesday's lesson, decreasing the scores of the Still Slide Group. Conversely,

---

<sup>6</sup> Heather-Jane Robertson, "Does Size Matter," *Phi Delta Kappan* 87, no. 3 (2005): 251-258.  
John St. Godard, "Small and Steady Wins the Race," *Psychology Today* 338, no. 6 (2005): 24.



having spent a refreshing afternoon in the water might have helped to increase their scores.

All experiments face similar problems and external factors as this one did. In the absence of any clear indication as to whether any of these factors directly or indirectly influenced the outcome of the experiment, and without any indication of the direction or magnitude of any such potential influence, the results must be viewed with cautious optimism and applied with tempered judgment until they are confirmed or refuted by further experimentation.

### ***Conclusions and Future Studies***

Reviewing the overall results of the experiment shows that the data demonstrates that the multimedia presentation led to a statistically significant improvement in three of the experiment's eight dependent variables. Specifically, the Multimedia Group significantly outscored the Control Group and the Still Slide Group in regard to enjoyment of the lesson, stimulation of thought, and stimulation of the emotions. The multimedia presentation also led to significantly higher scores than the still slide presentation for the dependent variables of concentration/A.I.M.E., and attention paid to the lesson. The Control Group (the Verbal Only Group) also significantly outperformed the Still Slide Group in regard to concentration/A.I.M.E. upon the lesson. There was no statistically significant difference found between any of the groups in regard to level of communication, recall, or ability to persuade. These results are summarized in Table 8 below.

**TABLE 8**  
**Summary of Statistically Significant Results**

Results	Dependent Variables
<b>A&gt;B &amp;C</b>	Stimulation of Thought Stimulation of Emotions Enjoyment
<b>A&gt;B only</b>	A.I.M.E. Holding of Attention
<b>C&gt;B only</b>	A.I.M.E.
<b>95% Confidence Level Not Reached</b>	Persuasion Communication Recall

Having said this, it is certainly noteworthy that, in regard to the raw data, the multimedia presentation led to an improvement in the scores of all eight dependent variables. Of course, as demonstrated this effect did not always achieve the magnitude needed to reach the 95% confidence threshold required by the statistical analysis. Even so, the results fit all of the predictions of H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>3</sub>. It is reasonable, given the published history of research and the consistent pattern of the data to suspect that an improved experiment will provide statistically significant separation between the Multimedia Group and the Control Group in most, if not all eight, of the dependent variables.

Conversely, both the raw data and the statistical analysis refute the predictions of Hypothesis Two. The still slide presentation did not consistently improve Group B's measurements of the dependent variables in comparison with the Control Group's. Statistically, Group B did not demonstrate any significant improvement in any category in comparison with the other two groups. In fact,

the measurement of one dependent variable, concentration, showed that the Control Group demonstrated a statistically significant advantage over the Still Slide Group. Thus, it can be reasonably said that the experiment discredits the claims of  $H_2$ .

After analyzing the results of the experiment certain improvements need to be suggested. Because most of the results did not exceed the statistical level of confidence despite very promising initial indications, changes should be instituted to ensure that, if there really is a valid effect of the independent variable, the results are more definitive. Several alterations will help to achieve this goal. It will be remembered that increasing the sample size, increasing the effect of the dependent variable, or decreasing the variability of the data helps to achieve the statistically critical threshold.

First, the number of participants in each group should exceed thirty, and preferably forty. This is because the rate of change in the critical statistical values (e.g.,  $F_{crit}$ ,  $T_{crit}$ ,  $Q_{crit}$ ) decreases rapidly above this threshold. Therefore, it is much easier to prove a significant event using a group of forty than it is a group of twenty. Further, because the inferential statistical tests used assume a normal curve, and “since most populations encountered in the behavioral sciences do not differ greatly from normality, if  $N \geq 30$ , it is usually assumed that the sampling distribution of the mean will be normally shaped.”<sup>7</sup> While Groups A and B contained at least thirty students, Group C contained only twenty, which affected the outcome of every comparison between Group A and Group C, and between Group B and Group C.

---

<sup>7</sup> Pagano, 267.

Further, it would be helpful to have the groups consist of the same number of students in each group, or at least a close approximation between groups. The Tukey HSD Test equation assumes equal numbers in each group. Lacking equality, a harmonic mean is used as an approximation, which can affect the accuracy of the test. In this experiment the Tukey HSD Test was confirmed using an A Priori, Independent Groups T-Test. However, since the Tukey Test and the T-Test can yield differing results (as demonstrated) it would be best to have the groups consist of equal numbers to ensure the accuracy of the Tukey analysis.

Naturally the experiment could be improved by ensuring a random selection process of the students. Although the pre-test demonstrated that the groups were equivalent regarding the important factors identified in its questions, there is always the possibility that some unanticipated factor not tested for could have influenced the experiment's outcome. A more thorough randomization would reduce this possibility.

Better results might also be obtained if the general instructions given to all the groups were improved. The pre-test/post-test questions covering communication were hampered by a very large percentage of the students choosing the maximum score on the pre-test. If they were instructed to temper their judgment on the numeric scale questions then there might be a better separation of the curves resulting from the data allowing for more definitive results.

The number of questions asked on the post-test was constrained by space. It was predetermined to limit the post-test to two pages so that it would not become so lengthy and time consuming that middle school students would either fail to complete it or do so thoughtlessly. In retrospect, significantly more questions were needed to better assess the dependent variable of content recall. The error rate was not high enough to allow for a statistically significant difference to be declared. More questions would increase the chance of the differences in the raw data reaching the critical statistical threshold. Further, it is noted that while the questions asked were taken directly from the content of the verbal lesson, they did not directly relate to anything specifically illustrated in the visual images. Perhaps if the subject matter of the questions were illustrated in the visual media there might be an improvement in the scores of those groups.

In this experiment eight dependent variables were measured. This was probably too ambitious. Given the time and length constraints placed upon the post-test, the experiment would have been improved by reducing the number of dependent variables and increasing the number of questions measuring each of them. This would probably create more definitive results, as there would be more data available for each variable.

Of course the data generated in this experiment flowed from two specific individual visual presentations. Further studies could duplicate the same verbal lesson and visual images and shift or alter how the visual images are presented in order to measure how that affects the data. Researchers could also measure if changing the content of the visual presentation, keeping all else the same,

changes the outcome. Thus it could be determined whether the effect is mostly dependent upon the quality of the content of the visual presentation, or is primarily due to the inclusion of the visual medium itself.

Additionally, this experiment predominantly utilized a verbal delivery for the lesson's content. The visual presentations were really only enhancements of the verbal message. Further studies could explore more creative uses of visual media in which either the visual presentations are better integrated into the verbal message or, perhaps, may even be the stand-alone message.

Pondering why the multimedia presentation actually had a positive effect is an interesting pursuit. It preceded the lesson without any introduction but was in no way self-explanatory. Therefore, if the students were captivated by it at all they would likely be motivated to listen to discover its meaning. As mentioned earlier, the human brain inherently strives to make sense of and discover meaning in the sensory data it receives. So the students would by nature begin the verbal part of the lesson interested in understanding what they had just experienced. This ought to have increased attention, concentration, thinking and, therefore, communication. Altering the experiment by showing the multimedia presentation after the lesson may produce lower scores, which might serve to demonstrate the validity of this reasoning.

Secondly, the visual images supplied mental pictures for the students to remember as the various aspects of the lesson were unpacked. Like hooks on a wall on which coats are hung, the mental pictures provided concrete visual hooks to associate with the abstract concepts of the lesson. When the concept of

judgment was discussed, they had the visual memory of the courtroom fresh in their minds. When the Paraclete was discussed the image of the constant and encouraging friend was at hand. When Christ's sacrificial death was covered, the mental picture of the gallows was brought to life. Therefore, one might expect this nexus of word and image to increase the level of communication of the lesson and of the lesson's recall.

It would be interesting to study the long-term memory of the sample groups to see if there is a difference between them. The research discussed previously would predict that the higher emotional stimulation recorded by the multimedia presentation would enhance their memory. A future study could have each group undergo a second post-test a lengthy period of time after the lesson to produce data regarding long-term memory.

Similarly, it is a perplexing question as to why the still slide presentation had such a negative effect upon the dependent variables when one would expect the opposite result. It seemed reasonable to expect that the visual images provided by the slides would provide the same mental "hooks" as the multimedia presentation did. However, in retrospect it is noted that the slides were shown concurrently with the verbal lesson, not preceding it. Thus, no level of heightened interest was generated prior to the commencement of the verbal lesson and the students did not begin the lesson searching to discover the meaning of the pictures.

Even more significant, viewing the slides carefully would require taking attention away from listening to the speaker. If this is so, it is quite reasonable to

expect that the participants of Group B missed some of what the speaker said because they were engaged in viewing the interesting visual aids. Therefore, the visual presentation was actually counterproductive as it worked to undermine the speaker. The raw data certainly demonstrates quite an underperformance by the Still Slide Group in relation to the Control Group. Not surprisingly, Edward R. Tufte's critique of the effect of PowerPoint slides upon communication (PowerPoint produces visual slides that are also usually shown concurrently with a verbal presentation) also demonstrates a negative correlation between PowerPoint usage and effective communication.<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, this experiment sought to establish a quantitative benchmark in regard to eight independent variables for two specific differing visual presentations contrasted to a control group. It was successful in doing so. The multimedia presentation displayed before the verbal lesson demonstrated an improvement in the raw data for all eight of the dependent variables and a statistically significant improvement for three of them. On the other hand, the still slide presentation displayed during the verbal lesson demonstrated a general underperformance in the scoring of the raw data in comparison with the Control Group, statistically significantly so for one of the dependent variables. The next chapter will address the significance that these results have for American youth ministry and for the church at large.

---

<sup>8</sup> Edward R. Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint* (Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press LLC, 2003), 12.



## CHAPTER 7

### IMPLICATIONS

Up to this point this thesis has explored in some detail the prevalence of visual media in American youth ministry and the positive attitudes of youth pastors toward it. It has covered the oscillation of image usage by the church throughout its history along with church leaders' diverse attitudes toward those images. It has delved into some of the theological issues and controversies surrounding image usage and highlighted some of the pitfalls encountered by such use. It has also investigated the scientific research that seems to indicate a positive potential benefit from employing visual images in the teaching and preaching ministry, and has discussed the promising results of its own experiment in this regard. Now it is time to review the potential benefits that incorporating visual imagery into ministry offers and to discuss some of the problems that doing so could entail for American youth ministry, and for the church at large. Finally, a modest way forward will be presented regarding how to best utilize visual images to realize their potential benefits and avoid their potential drawbacks.

#### ***Potential Benefits***

As much discussion has already been devoted to the positive potential of incorporating visual images into the preaching and teaching ministry of the church at large, and of American youth ministry in particular, only a brief synopsis

will be attempted here. It is undoubtedly evident to the reader who has completed the preceding chapters that the opinion of this writer in regard to incorporating visual images into ministry is one of hearty support, as it seems unreasonable to deny God's people an avenue of instruction that could significantly help them without sound and convincing reasons. This support is, though, coupled with caution and reflection regarding the potential pitfalls that image use could hold (and in previous centuries has held). The promises of visual media, however, make the risk of incorporating them into the church worthwhile if done responsibly and thoughtfully.

The modern research into cognition, learning, and persuasion has certainly underscored the positive potential of visual media in the teaching and preaching ministry of the church in general and youth ministry in particular. We now know that people mentally process stimuli somewhat differently according to the nature of the stimulus and the unique configuration of the neuron network of the individual's brain. Therefore one group of people will more easily process one symbol system than they will another, while a different segment of the audience may well be the reverse. Some people learn best visually, others through auditory instruction, and others through experiential discovery. Giving the same message using different presentation methods, of which multimedia is one, allows the youth pastor to speak to kids in a variety of symbol systems, which should be of benefit to them.

Likewise it has been demonstrated that by increasing the mental stimulation caused by a message one increases the comprehension and

retention of that message. Similarly, as discussed previously, increasing the emotional stimulation of the audience can increase memory of the message and increase the ability to persuade. Therefore, by using creative methods that increase brain activity and touch the emotions the youth pastor can increase his effectiveness as a communicator. Visual images, especially those now available through the new technologies, are adept at doing just these things and offer promise for increasing the youth pastor's ability to communicate and to persuade.

This project's experiment provided empirical evidence of just such a benefit. It must be again pointed out, however, that this experiment measured the effect of one particular multimedia presentation, and one particular still slide presentation, each presented in a single manner. One cannot, based solely on this experiment, expect that these results will necessarily predict results produced by other presentations that might be used in real ministry contexts. Those presentations might be either more or less effective based upon their content and manner of presentation. That being said, the group of students that was exposed to the experiment's multimedia presentation did outscore the Control Group and the Still Slide Group in all of the eight dependent variables that were measured. These dependent variables were:

- 1). Stimulation of thought
- 2). Emotional stimulation
- 3). Enjoyment of the lesson
- 4). A.I.M.E.
- 5). Lesson's ability to hold students' attention
- 6). Persuasion
- 7). Communication of the lesson's points
- 8). Recall of specific lesson content

Further, for the first three of these dependent variables, the measured benefit of the multimedia presentation was sufficiently great to meet a 95% confidence level in the statistical analysis of the results in a comparison between the Multimedia Group and the Control Group. The same is true for the first four dependent variables regarding a comparison between the Multimedia Group and the Still Slide Group.

### ***Critical Cautions***

However, the gain was not a monumental one. That is to say that while the multimedia presentation did seem to improve the lesson, it did not do so to such a great extent as to make its use imperative. The youth pastor and the church at large should consider the gains achieved in light of some cautionary factors.

One caution regarding the use of the new computer-generated visual technologies is their cost in terms of time and money. If further experimentation demonstrates that this experiment's results are accurate, that the gain from using multimedia is small to moderate, then one must conclude that it would be a mistake to sap vital ministry resources of time and money in order to use it. If, for example, the youth pastor must choose between having a weekly small group Bible study with kids or preparing a flashy multimedia message for the large group meeting, he should probably always choose the face-to-face ministry opportunity. In fact, if preparing visual image presentations restricts the youth pastor from any direct and personal ministry then it should probably be

jettisoned. Productive time with people should take priority over time with machines as teens will more likely benefit by having the youth pastor invest time into them than they will by watching a media program into which he invested his time. Likewise small churches with very limited youth ministry budgets should probably not sacrifice more important priorities in order to purchase the equipment needed to produce video presentations. The benefit produced by such programs may not be worth the sacrifices made in order to buy the needed equipment. The same is true for the broader church as well.

While this project did not specifically investigate the effectiveness of PowerPoint presentations, the still slide presentation was in some ways similar to it, and, when coupled with other published critiques of the ineffectiveness of PowerPoint as a communication tool, should cause the youth pastor to at least question its use. Chapter 1 reported that almost three-quarters of youth pastors use PowerPoint and that they, on average, invest several hours per week into its preparation. The data also demonstrates that some invest much more time. If this computer program is not helpful, or has a deleterious effect upon their communication (as was the result with the still pictures tested in this experiment), then youth pastors' use of it represents wasted time, energy, and money. Those using it should consider when its use is justified and beneficial, and restrict their use of it to such contexts.

Another caution to be considered is the possibility of turning visual technologies into an idol. Given the fact that the vast majority of youth pastors are using computer-generated slides and multimedia presentations, and using

them often, there perhaps is a temptation to begin to depend upon the efficacy of the method instead of upon the work of the Holy Spirit. It should always be remembered that the church is dependent upon the Lord to change hearts and to ultimately reveal truth and understanding. The church and its teachers are never dependent upon a technology, a method, or upon certain special individuals. Any ministry that looks to visual technology as a technological messiah will discover that the light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming freight train. Technology will not save a person or a ministry.<sup>1</sup> If a time arises in which the church becomes overly dependent upon or enamored with visual technologies instead depending upon the Lord, then their use should be curtailed. Visual technologies ought to be viewed as one of many tools that the youth pastor or the preacher has at his disposal to help him communicate with the people of God, not as the essential or unique medium through which God speaks.

Along the same line a caution from history ought to be recalled. In the Middle Ages as dependence upon image usage increased, didactic preaching decreased. As discussed previously, image conveys certain messages well (e.g., story, emotion), but propositional truth is something it does not convey well. The Gospel presentation and church catechesis need propositional argument and explanation. Without such clearly defined teaching, history has shown that the spiritual character of the church has suffered. Therefore, while this paper has argued against the elimination of the image, the elimination of the word in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church and all its parts must likewise be avoided.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jewell, 67 and 72.

## ***The Proper Use of Visual Images***

While it is certainly true that computer-generated visual technologies are relatively recent additions to the toolbox of youth ministry, which itself is a relatively recent addition to the church, the use of images has a long and varied history in the church. It is a serious mistake to form a conclusion about the use of these new visual technologies in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church without taking this history into consideration.

As demonstrated previously, the church has a long-running “love/hate” relationship with images. Its views have oscillated between the poles of complete acceptance and utter rejection, often resting somewhere in between. These views have changed with time, geography, theology, culture, political and economic conditions, and the personal preferences of local church leaders. There have been many faithful and godly men and women in the church through the centuries who have held contradictory views on the subject. Can one truly say that Francis of Assisi was less spiritual of a Christian than Ulrich Zwingli because he used images? Likewise, was John Calvin less faithful of a teacher than Athanasius because he eschewed them? Clearly neither statement is appropriate. Therefore, regardless of the personal opinion of the individual Christian, one should draw the conclusion that making a blanket condemnation upon either those who use images or upon those who refuse to use images (both of which has been done in the past) is inappropriate. There have been, and still are, godly men and women on both sides of this issue who have faithfully served Christ.

History has shown, though, that Christians in certain cultures and at certain times have been helped and inspired by images. Many pieces of art and architecture, though made centuries ago, inspire Christians today.<sup>2</sup> Therefore a ban on all such images removes from the church what has often been a useful tool. However, these images have at times become stumbling blocks as well. Therefore caution must be taken if their use is to be embraced. That which is of use today may become a hindrance tomorrow. Practices must be altered or abandoned if they outlive their usefulness and become a detriment. Youth pastors (and all Christian leaders) must therefore vigilantly evaluate their methods and practices to determine if they are still serving the body of Christ and eliminate those that may have become unhealthy or counterproductive.

Additionally, if images are to be used to supplement the word in the teaching and preaching ministry of the church then these images (just like the words of teaching) must be carefully chosen. Given the ambiguous nature of visual communication, a poorly chosen image could easily lead to a misinterpretation by the viewer. This could result in confusion as to the point of the message or even a misrepresentation of God's character. Therefore the youth pastor or preacher should prayerfully and thoughtfully consider what visuals are used, and support them with a clear verbal interpretation so as to limit the possibility of any misunderstanding.

Likewise, the use to which visual images are put needs to be carefully considered and planned. While the Protestant reformers were making great use

---

<sup>2</sup> It will be remembered that the ecclesiastical architecture of the Byzantine period and of the Middle Ages intentionally visually portrayed theological messages. Perhaps today's church leaders should ask what messages their architecture portrays.



of the newly invented printing press to persuasively argue for the truth of their doctrines, the Catholic Church was using it “as a way to reinforce norms through the publication of scripts of the correct Latin Mass, which was then distributed to distant outpost parishes that had been adapting the Mass in form and language to make it understandable to its indigenous communities.”<sup>3</sup> The same technological invention was both effective and ineffective depending upon how it was put to use. Luther and his compatriots understood the printing press’ powerful ability to rapidly disseminate ideas and put it to productive use. Rome saw it only as a means of spreading information and initially missed out on its most effective application. In the same way, youth ministers and the broader church need to gain an understanding of the strengths and abilities of the newly created visual technologies so that these inventions can be used most effectively. They must also discover the limitations and liabilities of this technology, as not doing so can lead to unfortunate results. Pierre Salinger famously embarrassed and discredited himself when he called a press conference to announce that he had proof that a United States military missile had inadvertently shot down TWA flight 800. His proof turned out to have been pictures collected from Internet websites and was, of course, bogus. This incident occurred in the early days of the Internet and Salinger simply did not understand the limitations and dangers inherent in this new digital source of information.<sup>4</sup> Not understanding the limitations of visual technology and visual communication might lead youth ministers to equally disappointing results.

---

<sup>3</sup> Wilson and Moore, *Digital Storytellers*, 14 and 15.

<sup>4</sup> Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 39.

In addition, the youth pastor and the church at large should also remember visual communication's potential and strive to accentuate its strengths. Multimedia presentations are adept at telling stories, so one of their primary applications ought to be presenting narratives that convey a point. The multimedia presentation used in this project's experiment created a drama based upon the scenes from a film (in this case one that was unknown to most students so that they did not view it in the context of the entire movie) coupled with the words of a song. The meaning of the presentation was, by itself, quite ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations. The verbal lesson clarified and explained the meaning of the multimedia, and used its images to reinforce the main points of the lesson. This is analogous with the Lord's use of visual illustration to instruct Abraham. In Genesis 15:5, God instructs Abraham to view the night sky filled with stars—an unforgettable image but one with no definite meaning—and then explains the significance of the image to him. Image coupled with the clarifying words makes for a powerful method of communication.

The usage of multimedia in this experiment illustrates some other potential strengths of visual media. Visuals are best used when they provoke interest, thought (brain activity), and attention from the audience. In doing so they increase the lesson's or sermon's overall ability to communicate and persuade. They are best when they create a metaphor that symbolizes a deeper truth. In the same way that a cross hanging on the wall of a local church symbolizes Christ's sacrificial death to the congregation, an image can mediate a truth about God to the people. In this experiment, for example, the image of a courtroom

judge was used to illustrate and symbolize God, the judge of all humanity.

Further, images are at their best when they stir the emotions of the people. As discussed previously, in life people often do not think logically and therefore make heuristic decisions. They are also constantly surrounded in American culture by pictures and moving images designed to push them to actions and attitudes that are contrary to the Christian faith. Therefore visual symbols, pictures, or images provided by the church that serve to emotionally move them toward right decisions and actions can be a benefit to the people of God.

Likewise, visuals are best when they work symbiotically with their verbal explanation. In this way they serve to reinforce the teaching instead of inadvertently working against it. Visual presentations that are distracting or simply entertaining, and do not reinforce the teaching, are counterproductive. Those that illustrate, reiterate, and create mental images for remembrance can be powerful and effective.

Further, visual images are best used when the point the preacher or teacher desires to make is most clearly communicated through vision. For example, saving faith is an abstract concept but it can be concretely and easily explained to youth in one minute by watching Indiana Jones (in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*) step out onto an invisible bridge because his father's notebook instructs him to do so. His small-as-a-mustard-seed faith is on display as, sweating with fear and doubt, he believes enough to step out in faith. Other concepts are not easily displayed visually and different rhetorical tools should be used to explain them.

Visual presentations can be at their best when they are prepared by laymen using their gifts in ministry for the benefit of God's people. As discussed above, if the youth pastor or pastor is taking time away from direct ministry in order to construct flashy multimedia presentations (see Acts 6:2) then the visual elements have become more harmful than helpful. If, on the other hand, a team of volunteers prepares the images then this creates direct ministry opportunities for the youth pastor or pastor to minister to and instruct the team as they work together to plan the content of the presentation, and for the team to minister to the youth or congregation through their creative work.

Also as mentioned previously, today's youth in America are growing up in an audiovisual culture. They are accustomed to pictures and multimedia and are experienced in decoding the communication of image. Therefore, including visual technologies in the teaching or preaching of youth ministry will not strike many kids as odd, out of place, or inappropriate. In fact, using them poorly (such as in a manner far behind the technological standard of the day) or not at all might seem odd or disconcerting to them. The broader church, however, may face cultural issues if it attempts to use visual technology in the same way. There are perhaps many older Americans who did not grow up in the media culture and who view the incorporation of visual technologies as inappropriate for the church.<sup>5</sup> The same could be said for certain denominational traditions, and for certain international cultures. The use of visual technologies in these

---

<sup>5</sup> Kevin A. Purcell, "The Role That Multimedia Can Play in Expository Preaching." D.Min. Thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2005, 1.

contexts would be inappropriate, as it would create a stumbling block to communication instead of a being a boon.

Similarly, some youth pastors have decided that American youth culture is so awash with media messages that using them has become ineffective in communicating to their kids. Therefore they have reacted against technology and embraced simplicity as a better way to reach their students. Much as the early monastics reacted against the over-enculturation of the church after Constantine, these youth pastors are reacting against the over-incorporation of the culture of technology by the church and seek to communicate the Gospel in quiet simplicity.<sup>6</sup> If their assessment of American youth culture is correct, or if such a time does come, then a retreat from the incorporation of technology into the ministry would be warranted.

Finally it should be remembered that throughout church history the use of images has reflected the theology of the people of the time. Mary and the saints were commonly portrayed in the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages because of the humanistic elements that had crept into the church (e.g., the treasury of merit). Likewise, icons came to the fore in the East because of the Orthodox Church's strong emphasis upon the incarnation and mystical theology. Images largely disappeared in the Protestant Reformation because of the reformers' emphasis upon the preached word and grace through faith, neither of which needed mediating images. Youth pastors and church leaders should consider if today's renewed embrace of visual images with their accompanying ambiguity of

---

<sup>6</sup> Bruce Curtis, "Retro-Worship: Challenging the Techno Paradigm," *Youthworker*, March/April 2001, 36.

meaning reflects a fuzziness of thought consistent with a postmodern worldview. If this is so, perhaps what are needed are fewer images and more propositional instruction to counterbalance this drift.

## ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, the results of this project as well as the research underlying it demonstrate that there is a real potential benefit to be gained by incorporating visual technologies into the teaching and preaching ministry of American youth ministry and, by extension, the church at large. This study also demonstrates, however, that using visual elements poorly can actually lead to a diminishment of the youth pastor's ability to communicate effectively. Further, this project's study of the church's use of image throughout its history highlights important potential problems and pitfalls surrounding an over-dependence upon image and neglect of the word. Therefore it is recommended that youth pastors and church leaders incorporate the new visual technologies into their ministries with prayer, thoughtfulness, reflection, and restraint. These technologies offer an opportunity to broaden the ministry team and to improve communication, but also offer the temptation to over-use and idolize them. A wise balance and interconnection between the image and the preached word is necessary to avoid the mistakes of the past and to fully utilize the potential that the new visual technologies have to offer.

# APPENDIX 1

## Experiment's Results

### A. Means and Standard Deviations For Quantifiable Answers

	<u>All Participants</u>			<u>Group A</u> <u>Multimedia</u>			<u>Group B</u> <u>Still Slides</u>			<u>Group C</u> <u>Verbal Only</u>		
Q. #	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Q1	85	<b>12.79</b>	0.977	33	<b>12.73</b>	1.098	32	<b>12.84</b>	0.847	20	<b>12.80</b>	1.005
Q6	85	<b>6.72</b>	1.887	33	<b>6.79</b>	1.746	32	<b>6.72</b>	2.083	20	<b>6.60</b>	1.875
Q7	85	<b>8.64</b>	1.557	33	<b>8.70</b>	1.425	32	<b>8.47</b>	1.831	20	<b>8.80</b>	1.322
Q8	85	<b>8.78</b>	1.886	33	<b>9.03</b>	1.489	32	<b>8.44</b>	2.409	20	<b>8.90</b>	1.483
Q9	85	<b>8.82</b>	1.965	33	<b>9.09</b>	1.331	32	<b>8.53</b>	2.615	20	<b>8.85</b>	1.631
Q10	85	<b>8.80</b>	1.907	33	<b>8.94</b>	1.413	32	<b>8.41</b>	2.564	20	<b>9.20</b>	1.240
P1	85	<b>3.74</b>	0.726	33	<b>4.06</b>	0.747	32	<b>3.56</b>	0.716	20	<b>3.50</b>	0.513
P2	83	<b>3.41</b>	0.976	33	<b>3.79</b>	0.820	30	<b>2.90</b>	1.062	20	<b>3.55</b>	0.759
P3	85	<b>4.15</b>	0.866	33	<b>4.55</b>	0.617	32	<b>3.78</b>	1.008	20	<b>4.10</b>	0.718
P4	84	<b>4.14</b>	0.730	33	<b>4.33</b>	0.595	32	<b>4.06</b>	0.801	19	<b>3.95</b>	0.780
P5	85	<b>4.02</b>	0.707	33	<b>4.21</b>	0.600	32	<b>3.91</b>	0.734	20	<b>3.90</b>	0.788
P6	85	<b>4.25</b>	0.754	33	<b>4.39</b>	0.659	32	<b>4.13</b>	0.833	20	<b>4.20</b>	0.768
P7	85	<b>3.81</b>	1.029	33	<b>4.33</b>	0.816	32	<b>3.38</b>	1.008	20	<b>3.65</b>	1.040
P8	85	<b>3.19</b>	1.063	33	<b>3.73</b>	0.977	32	<b>2.75</b>	1.047	20	<b>3.00</b>	0.858
P9	82	<b>3.48</b>	1.091	30	<b>3.93</b>	0.944	32	<b>3.03</b>	1.062	20	<b>3.50</b>	1.100
P11	85	<b>8.12</b>	1.679	33	<b>8.55</b>	1.371	32	<b>7.63</b>	1.996	20	<b>8.20</b>	1.436
P12	85	<b>9.04</b>	1.651	33	<b>9.09</b>	1.444	32	<b>8.88</b>	2.044	20	<b>9.20</b>	1.281
P13	85	<b>9.13</b>	1.572	33	<b>9.33</b>	1.164	32	<b>8.81</b>	2.007	20	<b>9.30</b>	1.342
P14	85	<b>9.32</b>	1.424	33	<b>9.64</b>	0.742	32	<b>9.09</b>	1.855	20	<b>9.15</b>	1.461
P15	85	<b>9.07</b>	1.683	31	<b>9.48</b>	0.962	31	<b>8.68</b>	2.197	20	<b>9.05</b>	1.572
P16	82	<b>8.41</b>	1.832	31	<b>8.87</b>	1.176	31	<b>7.97</b>	2.258	20	<b>8.40</b>	1.847
P17	82	<b>8.51</b>	1.756	31	<b>8.77</b>	1.230	32	<b>8.44</b>	2.063	20	<b>8.20</b>	1.936
P18	83	<b>9.02</b>	1.491	31	<b>9.23</b>	1.055	31	<b>8.87</b>	1.910	20	<b>8.95</b>	1.356
P22	63	<b>8.08</b>	2.042	31	<b>8.84</b>	1.186	32	<b>7.34</b>	2.418	0	<b>N/A</b>	N/A

Q6= Pre-test Question #6

P1= Post-test Question # 1

N= Total # of responses in group

Mean= Sum of all responses in a group divided by N

SD= Standard Deviation

**B. Mean Differences Between Pre-Test & Post-Test, P<sub>11-15</sub> to Q<sub>6-10</sub>**

	<u>All Participants</u>			<u>Group A Multimedia</u>			<u>Group B Still Slides</u>			<u>Group C Verbal Only</u>		
Q. #	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
P11-Q6	85	<b>1.400</b>	1.338	33	<b>1.758</b>	1.370	32	<b>0.906</b>	1.088	20	<b>1.600</b>	1.465
P12-Q7	85	<b>0.400</b>	1.274	33	<b>0.394</b>	1.519	32	<b>0.406</b>	1.214	20	<b>0.400</b>	0.940
P13-Q8	85	<b>0.353</b>	1.077	33	<b>0.303</b>	1.132	32	<b>0.375</b>	1.185	20	<b>0.400</b>	0.821
P14-Q9	85	<b>0.494</b>	1.140	33	<b>0.545</b>	1.175	32	<b>0.563</b>	1.366	20	<b>0.300</b>	0.571
P15-Q10	82	<b>0.317</b>	1.404	31	<b>0.613</b>	1.256	31	<b>0.323</b>	1.600	20	<b>-0.150</b>	1.226

Q6= Pre-test Question #6

P11= Post-test Question # 11

N= Total # of responses in group

Mean= Sum of all differences (P<sub>x</sub>-Q<sub>y</sub>) in a group divided by N

SD= Standard Deviation

**C. Frequency Distributions for Non-Quantifiable Answers**

**Q2-Grade**

	<u>All Participants</u>		<u>Group A Multimedia</u>		<u>Group B Still Slides</u>		<u>Group C Verbal Only</u>	
Grade	Frequency	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
6	4	4.7	2	6.1	0	0	2	10.0
7	24	28.2	8	24.2	11	34.4	5	25.0
8	36	42.4	14	42.4	13	40.6	9	45.0
9	21	24.7	9	27.3	8	25.0	4	20.0
Total	85	100	33	100	32	100	20	100

Frequency= number of students per group in a given grade



### Q3-State

	All Participants		Group A Multimedia		Group B Still Slides		Group C Verbal Only	
State	Frequency	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
FL	1	1.2	1	3.0	0	0	0	0
MA	24	28.2	8	24.2	9	28.1	7	35.0
MD	24	28.2	20	60.6	4	12.5	0	0
NH	27	31.8	4	12.1	17	53.1	6	30.0
NJ	2	2.4	0	0	0	0	2	10.0
NY	7	8.2	0	0	2	6.3	5	25.0
Total	85	100	33	100	32	100	20	100

Frequency= number of students per group from a given state

### Q4-Father's Education

	All Participants		Group A Multimedia		Group B Still Slides		Group C Verbal Only	
State	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
High School	2	2.4	1	3.0	1	3.1	0	0
Some College	7	8.2	3	9.1	3	9.4	1	5.0
College Grad.	42	49.4	16	48.5	17	53.1	9	45.0
Adv. Degree	16	18.8	9	27.3	5	15.6	2	10.0
Don't Know	18	21.2	4	12.1	6	18.8	8	40.0
Total	85	100	33	100	32	100	20	100

Frequency= number of fathers per group in a given educational category

### Q5-Mother's Education

	All Participants		Group A Multimedia		Group B Still Slides		Group C Verbal Only	
State	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
High School	7	8.2	3	9.1	3	9.4	1	5.0
Some College	7	8.2	5	15.2	1	3.1	1	5.0
College Grad.	32	37.6	12	36.4	13	40.6	7	35.0
Adv. Degree	18	21.2	8	24.2	8	25.0	2	10.0
Don't Know	21	24.7	5	15.2	7	21.9	9	45.0
Total	85	100	33	100	32	100	20	100

Frequency= number of mothers per group in a given educational category

**Sum of P19, P20, P21- Recall Questions**

	<b>All Participants</b>		<b>Group A Multimedia</b>		<b>Group B Still Slides</b>		<b>Group C Verbal Only</b>	
<b>Answers</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Correct	212	87.2	85	91.4	76	84.4	51	85.0
Incorrect	31	12.8	8	8.6	14	15.6	9	15.0
Total	243	100	93	100	90	100	60	100

**D. Frequency Distributions Pre-Test/Post-Test Comparison**

**Frequency of Those Choosing Maximum Score of 10**

	<b>Group A Multimedia</b>		<b>Group B Still Slides</b>		<b>Group C Verbal Only</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Q6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q7	15	45.5	14	43.8	8	40.0
Q8	18	54.5	18	56.3	11	55.5
Q9	18	54.5	19	59.4	10	50.0
Q10	16	48.5	17	53.1	11	55.0
P11	10	30.1	2	6.3	2	10.0
P12	20	60.6	22	68.8	12	60.0
P13	22	66.7	21	65.6	14	70.0
P14	25	75.8	23	71.9	13	65.0
P15	19	57.6	18	56.3	13	65.0

## APPENDIX 2

### Statistical Results

A.

#### One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test

Question	Dep. Variable	F <sub>obt</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>	Sig.	Significant Difference
Q1	Age	0.115		0.892	NO
Q6	Base Line Data	0.060		0.941	NO
Q7	Base Line Data	0.316		0.730	NO
Q8	Base Line Data	0.856		0.429	NO
Q9	Base Line Data	0.656		0.522	NO
Q10	Base Line Data	1.216		0.302	NO
P1	Enjoyment	5.854		0.004	YES
P2	A.I.M.E.	7.923		0.001	YES
P3	Thinking	7.334		0.001	YES
P4	Thinking	2.046		0.136	NO
P5	Thinking	1.965		0.147	NO
P6	Thinking	1.085		0.343	NO
P7	Thinking	8.719		0.000	YES
P3-7*	Thinking	6.452	3.11		YES
P8	Emotions	8.853		0.000	YES
P9	Attention	5.944		0.004	YES
P11	Communication	2.565		0.083	NO
P12	Communication	0.264		0.768	NO
P13	Communication	1.047		0.356	NO
P14	Communication	1.372		0.259	NO
P15	Communication	1.817		0.169	NO
P16	Persuassion	1.928		0.152	NO
P17	Persuassion	0.685		0.507	NO
P18	Persuassion	0.466		0.629	NO
P16-18*	Persuassion	1.051	3.11		NO
P22	Enjoyment	9.608		0.003	YES

F<sub>obt</sub> = calculated/obtained value of F

F<sub>crit</sub> = Critical Value of F for 95% confidence level

F<sub>obt</sub> must be  $\geq 1$  to be considered; ALSO

F<sub>obt</sub> must be  $\geq F_{crit}$  for there to be a 95% confidence level that there is a significant difference between the groups; OR

Sig. must be  $\leq 0.05$  for there to be a 95% confidence level that there is a significant difference between the groups

\* Sum of the data for these questions

B.

### Chi Square Tests

Question	Variable	$\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$	$\chi^2_{\text{crit}}$	Significant Difference
Q2	Grade	3.839	12.592	NO
Q3	State	49.926	18.307	<b>YES</b>
Q4	Father Ed.	8.091	15.507	NO
Q5	Mother Ed.	9.017	15.507	NO
P19-21*	Recall	2.348	5.991	NO

$\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$  = calculated/obtained value of  $\chi^2$

$\chi^2_{\text{crit}}$  = Critical Value of  $\chi^2$  for 95% confidence level

$\chi^2_{\text{obt}}$  must be  $\geq \chi^2_{\text{crit}}$  for there to be a 95% confidence level that there is a significant difference between the groups

\* Sum of the data for these questions

C.

### Tukey HSD Test

Question	Dep. Variable	Comparison	Sig.	Significant Difference
P1	Enjoyment	A to C	0.014	<b>YES</b>
		B to C	0.946	NO
		A to B	0.012	<b>YES</b>
P2	A.I.M.E.	A to C	0.623	NO
		B to C	0.039	<b>YES</b>
		A to B	0.001	<b>YES</b>
P3	Thinking	A to C	0.132	NO
		B to C	0.353	NO
		A to B	0.001	<b>YES</b>
P7	Thinking	A to C	0.034	<b>YES</b>
		B to C	0.567	NO
		A to B	0.000	<b>YES</b>
P8	Emotions	A to C	0.028	<b>YES</b>
		B to C	0.644	NO
		A to B	0.000	<b>YES</b>
P9	Attention	A to C	0.317	NO
		B to C	0.644	NO
		A to B	0.000	<b>YES</b>

Sig. must be  $\leq 0.05$  for there to be a 95% confidence level that there is a significant difference between the groups

D.

### Paired Sample & Independent Groups T-Tests<sub>2-Tail</sub>

Question	Dep. Var.	Comparison	T <sub>obt</sub>	T <sub>crit</sub>	Sig.	Sig. Difference
P1	Enjoyment	B to C	0.321	1.988		NO
P2	A.I.M.E.	A to C	0.930	1.988		NO
P3	Thinking	A to C	1.944	1.988		NO
		B to C	1.386	1.988		NO
P7	Thinking	B to C	1.020	1.988		NO
P3-7*	Thinking	A to C	2.253	1.988		YES
		B to C	0.751	1.988		NO
		A to B	3.492	1.988		YES
P8	Emotions	B to C	0.896	1.988		NO
P9	Attention	B to C	1.157	1.988		NO
Q6/P11	Commun.	All to All	9.646		0.000	YES
		A to A	7.370		0.000	YES
		B to B	4.710		0.000	YES
		C to C	4.883		0.000	YES
Q7/P12	Commun.	All to All	2.894		0.005	YES
		A to A	1.489		0.146	NO
		B to B	1.892		0.068	NO
		C to C	1.902		0.072	NO
Q8/P13	Commun	All to All	3.022		0.003	YES
		A to A	1.538		0.134	NO
		B to B	1.791		0.083	NO
		C to C	2.179		0.042	YES
Q9/P14	Commun	All to All	3.995		0.000	YES
		A to A	2.667		0.012	YES
		B to B	2.329		0.027	YES
		C to C	2.349		0.030	YES
Q10/P15	Commun	All to All	2.044		.044	YES
		A to A	2.716		0.011	YES
		B to B	1.123		0.270	NO
		C to C	0.547		0.591	NO

All T values are 2-Tail values

T<sub>obt</sub> = calculated/obtained value of T

T<sub>crit</sub> = Critical Value of T for 95% confidence level

T<sub>obt</sub> must be  $\geq$  T<sub>crit</sub> for there to be a 95% confidence level that there is a significant difference between the groups; OR

Sig. must be  $\leq$  0.05 for there to be a 95% confidence level that there is a significant difference between the groups

\* Sum of the data for these questions

Comparisons of pre-test to post-test (e.g Q<sub>6</sub>-P<sub>11</sub>) are paired sample T-Tests. All else are A Priori Independent Groups T-Tests.

## APPENDIX 3

### Students' Answers to P10 and P22

**A.**

**P10: How did this lesson affect your emotions?**

#### **Group A**

3. It made me realize how generous and kind God is.
5. It made me think about doing the right thing and not being selfish.
6. It affected it because I learned that God will make good decisions.
7. It made me feel sad.
8. It made me realize how much God loves me and since Jesus lived his life for me, I will live my life for him.
13. It made me think of the dumb things I tried to get away with. It also reminded me how my dad's cancer went away and how happy I was. Then I thought of how my mom hits me and how it sucks.
11. It made me realize that I need to live my life for God.
14. It showed me God's love for us.
15. They made them deeper.
16. I felt thankful that Jesus would always be there for me and he is almost writing down everything I do wrong, so now I know that God will help me.
17. It made me see how much he really does for me.
18. I realized that I would rather live my life for Jesus than doing nothing about him giving up his life for me.
20. This lesson didn't really affect my emotions.
21. It did not affect my emotions.
22. It made me feel like I was a criminal that I sin all the time, but God forgives me.
23. I felt changed.
24. It affected my emotions to think more about God in a better way.
28. Made me think more about God and think about what he did for us.
30. It made me think about how god loves me and that made me grateful.
31. Made me think how lucky I am.
32. It made me realize what Jesus did for us and what we should do for him.
33. It made me think about living my life for God and Jesus because he took his life for mine.
34. It affected it a lot.
35. Thinking.
36. It made me think about how much God loves us.
37. It made me feel sad.
38. I now feel differently about who God really is.
39. Seeing this man die for his friend really made me see how much God loves us.
40. It just made me feel a little more sorry.

### **Group B**

2. I didn't really care. Sorry.
6. It affected it by seeing how much God really cares about us.
9. It got me knowing that God is there for me through the hard and painful times.
10. I feel the need to trust Jesus instead of being afraid of Him.
13. I thought it affected them.
17. Well the stuff he talked about I already knew so I didn't have strong emotions but I guess I had a little.
19. It didn't really sway my emotions.
20. I thought it was good.
21. It made me realize God's justice for us.
22. It made me a little sad because Jesus died for me but it also made me happy that I have Him as a friend.
23. It got me thinking but it didn't hold my attention so my emotions couldn't really get going.
24. This lesson didn't really affect my emotions.
25. I realized how much God loves us.
27. It made me so grateful. It's hard to imagine what He went through for me.
28. Because I learned how much Jesus cares and how it has a similarity to now.
31. It made me feel about God's grace.
32. Made me think about what Jesus went through.
33. Because he is there for you even when you betrayed Him.
36. My faith and friendship with God is an emotional part of my life. I don't want to lose him, seeing as I just met Him yesterday. This seminar showed me exactly what I have to lose, and how I want to draw Him closer. Thank you so much for this lesson.
40. I felt that God was sitting here with me explaining it to me.

### **Group C**

1. It affected my emotions by showing me that God can't be thanked enough. He is just the best friend ever which let me know how much He loves me.
2. He's telling us God died for all my sins.
4. It didn't really. It just caused me to think.
5. Not too bad. I wasn't about to cry or anything.
6. It got me thinking about what an ordeal Jesus went through to prove His love for us.
7. I don't know.
8. I don't know exactly.
9. It did not really affect my emotions.
12. Yes.
15. It didn't.
16. It affected my emotions about how much God does for me.
17. It helped me understand things about God.
18. I was too tired for it to have a large effect on my emotions.
19. It didn't.
20. Yes.
21. By making me focus more about God.

22. It wasn't really emotional, but it did draw my attention.

**B.**

**P23: What did you like about [the visual presentation]?**

**Group A**

1. The song.
2. I like what it taught us.
3. How so many characters were like God.
5. How the music fit well with the movie.
6. I liked how his friend would do anything for his other friend.
8. It opened my mind.
13. It captured your attention and gave a powerful graphic example.
11. The reality.
14. It got me closer to God.
15. It was nice to have a movie not just talk.
17. I thought the video really portrayed how God does many things to help us and is always just.
18. I liked how I learned about Jesus life more.
20. Made it easier to understand.
21. The music was good.
22. It kept my attention.
23. It was a great example of God's justice.
24. It was interesting.
25. It explained it all.
28. His friend died for him, went to jail for him.
29. Movie.
31. It helped link the lesson.
32. I liked the background music and the scenes were cool.
33. Made me think.
35. The music in the background and the strong emotion from the characters.
37. I liked how it fit with the discussion.
38. It opened my mind.
39. I liked the music.
40. It set the tone, and the music seemed to match the video very well.

**Group B**

8. It kept my attention a little better.
9. How the judge wore a George Washington Wig.
10. I thought that the pics were great (I'm a visual learner!) and the rest was awesome! (most of the time).
11. It gave you something to look at and helped you not to have to picture it in your mind.



13. I liked that we could see how the people looked in the story.
15. It touched all the main ideas.
16. Candy, the guy's enthusiasm, the guy was interesting.
17. I don't know.
20. The candy and the talk.
21. It helped me get a mental image of what the talk was about.
22. It gave me a really good visual and helped me understand things in a different way.
23. They kind of kept my attention.
24. Everything.
27. It was very helpful to imagine what was going on.
28. I learned how much God and Jesus cared.
29. Interesting.
33. It was interesting.
34. Visual aid.
36. I liked how God was related to two characters with completely different roles and characteristics.
38. Candy! It was interesting and I didn't realize God played so many different roles.
40. It showed more of what was going on.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Copyright Issues**

No discussion about the current setting in which visual images are being used in youth ministry would be complete without at least a brief discussion regarding copyright law and its implications for the youth pastor. There is a great deal of confusion regarding what the copyright law allows the youth pastor to do in regard to using copyrighted material in visual presentations, and even published authors do not always agree. This confusion stems from the vague language of the law itself, and from the somewhat inconsistent interpretations that it has received from various court decisions.

As described in the third section of this chapter, a majority of youth pastors are using visual images, and many of the ways that they are using them might constitute a violation of copyright laws. For example, 87% of youth pastors are projecting song lyrics, almost all of which are probably copyrighted. Further, 74% are showing still slides, the source of which may be copyrighted. 94% show clips from commercial movies as part of their lessons, and all of these movies are definitely copyrighted. Even more problematic, 43% of youth pastors report editing or modifying commercial movie clips, producing a hybrid production. This section seeks to explain whether any of these types of visual presentations violates copyright law and to give guidance to the youth pastor regarding how to stay within the law.

The law itself was passed in 1790 and significantly revised five times (in 1831, 1870, 1909, 1976, and 1998). The law's intention to protect an author's or inventor's work stems from Article 1, Section 8, Clause 8 of the U.S. Constitution, which states,

“To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.”<sup>1</sup>

The important implication to understand is that the primary intention was to promote the public good through the progress of science and the arts, not to protect the economic interest of the author or inventor. The public good is, however, promoted by protecting the economic interest of author and inventor since the promise of economic benefit spurs creativity and invention, which ultimately benefits the public. Hence, copyright laws and federal courts recognize a tension between the immediate public good (such as the use of copyrighted material by the youth pastor) and the long-term public good of maintaining the economic incentive of inventors and authors. The Supreme Court stated in its decision regarding copyright law in *Sony v. Universal*, “The monopoly privileges that Congress may authorize are neither unlimited nor primarily designed to provide a special private benefit. Rather, the limited grant is a means by which an important public purpose may be achieved.”<sup>2</sup>

Illustrating the desire of Congress to allow for public good stemming from the use of copyrighted material is its inclusion of the principle of “Fair Use” into copyright law. Section 107 of the law deals with Fair Use, and is the section that will be of most relevance for the youth pastor. This section of the law reads:

Section 107. Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use

Notwithstanding the provisions of section 106, the fair use of a copyrighted work, including such use by reproduction in copies of phonorecords [any sound recording except those accompanying motion pictures or other audiovisual works] or by any other means specified by that section, for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including

---

<sup>1</sup> Esther R. Sinofsky, *A Copyright Primer for Educational and Industrial Media Producers* (Friday Harbor, WA: Copyright Informational Services, 1988), 10.

<sup>2</sup> 52 U.S.L.W. 4090, 4092-4093 (U.S. Jan. 17, 1984); as quoted in Sinofsky, 10.

multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include—

- (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- (2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
- (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, for example, an allowance is made for the use of copyrighted material in research such as was conducted in this project. Similarly, youth pastors, who are engaged in Christian education, can claim a Fair Use exemption for using movie/video clips as part of their lesson. This Fair Use exemption is limited, however, and reflects the above-mentioned legal tension.

This tension between the public good gained by the use of copyrighted material and the protection of the creator's economic interest is what causes the confusion as to what kind of usage, and what extent of usage constitutes a violation of the copyright law. As illustrated above, the language of the Fair Use provision is somewhat vague and there is not a clearly defined line detailing exactly what constitutes a violation. A Stanford University publication regarding copyright laws states:

The difficulty in claiming fair use is that there is no predictable way to guarantee that your use will actually qualify as a fair use. You may believe that your use qualifies—but, if the copyright owner disagrees, you may have to resolve the dispute in a courtroom. Even if you persuade the court that your use was in fact a fair use, the expense and time involved in litigation may well outweigh any benefit of using the material in the first place....

Because there is a sizable gray area in which fair use may or may not apply, there is never a guarantee that your use will qualify as a fair use. The fair use doctrine has been described as a murky concept in which it is often difficult to separate the lawful from the unlawful.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Public Law 94-553, 90 Stat. 2541 (1976), Title 17 of the U.S. Code codified at 17 U.S.C. Section 107, as quoted in Sinofsky, 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Stanford University Libraries, <http://fairuse.stanford.edu>, Chapter 9, D.

However, specifically examining the law regarding what constitutes fair use will be helpful in providing guidance for keeping the youth pastor out of legal trouble. The law offers four factors to be considered in deciding whether a use of copyrighted material is a Fair Use. First is the “purpose and character of the use.” Most youth pastors are working for nonprofit churches, and are engaged in Christian educational purposes, so this factor works in their favor. Second, the nature of the copyrighted work is to be considered. Song lyrics are significantly different than a movie clip, though the law does not elaborate on how such differences are to be considered. Third, the amount of the work used is to be considered. The less of the work that is used, the more likely the use can be considered a Fair Use. One caveat needs to be mentioned in this regard. If the small portion that was used constitutes the “heart of the work”, then even that small usage may violate the law.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, the economic effect that the usage has upon the copyrighted work has to be considered. That is, does the usage cause the creator to lose monetary income? If so then the use will be less likely to be considered a fair use.<sup>6</sup>

Applying these four Fair Use legal tests to the previously mentioned ways that youth pastors are using visual elements in their ministries clarifies at least some of the questions. Projecting song lyrics without permission or without license would seem to violate the third and fourth tests. That is to say that the youth pastor would be using the entire song (or certainly the majority of it) and that in doing so he would be depriving the artist of the revenue that could reasonably be expected if the youth pastor had

---

<sup>5</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Chapter 9, B 3.

<sup>6</sup> It must be reiterated that none of these tests are exclusive. A negative review of a commercial film, for example, is free to use a short clip of that film in the review, even though the negative nature of the review will hurt the economic return of the movie.

purchased a license. Such use of copyrighted material would not fall under Fair Use and would be a violation of the law.

On the other hand, projecting still slides of copyrighted material (such as a picture of a painting) for the purpose of using it to illustrate a lesson point may well be considered Fair Use. Copyright holders (such as publishers and studios) often meet with those who frequently claim Fair Use exemptions (such as educators) and establish Fair Use guidelines detailing what they agree to be Fair Use. Though these guidelines do not constitute law, and courts are not bound to follow them, they often are read into the Congressional record and the courts do often look to them for shaping their decisions.<sup>7</sup> Under new proposed guidelines, youth pastors (as educators) can legally digitalize a lawfully acquired analog image (such as scanning a photograph into the computer, or converting a VHS tape to DVD), unless the image is “readily available in digital form at a fair price.”<sup>8</sup> The youth pastor can, according to the guidelines, then legally project that image in a face-to-face teaching activity. There are some limitations, though. Obviously the picture can be shown in its entirety, but no more than five images by the same artist or photographer, and no more than ten percent or fifteen images from a single published collective work, may be used in any single presentation.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, even though he is projecting still slides of copyrighted material, the youth pastor may still be complying with the guidelines, using the images for “nonprofit educational purposes”, and having no deleterious effect upon the income of the

---

<sup>7</sup> Sinofsky, 39.

<sup>8</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Chapter 9, C. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Chapter 9, C. 2 and 3.

copyright holder. In this case, there would probably be no violation of copyright law and the youth pastor could be almost certain of not being sued.

Similarly, using short movie clips as visual aids in face-to-face instructional settings may also be considered Fair Use. The proposed media guidelines recommend allowing educators to freely use up to ten percent or three minutes (whichever is less) of a copyrighted film for instructional purposes. Likewise the guidelines suggest that a youth pastor may use ten percent or thirty seconds (whichever is less) of an individual musical work. He may even combine the two into a multimedia presentation. The Stanford publication on copyright law states:

There are extensive proposed guidelines for the creation and use of multimedia works. Multimedia works include any combination of music, text, graphics, illustrations, photographs and audiovisual imagery combined into an integrated presentation, along with accompanying projection and playback equipment....

In general, students and instructors may create multimedia works for face-to-face instruction, directed self-study or for remote instruction provided that the multimedia works are used only for educational purposes in systematic learning activities at nonprofit educational institutions.<sup>10</sup>

By using copyrighted film clips as part of his lesson the youth pastor has a strong argument for remaining inside of the factors listed by Congress to define Fair Use. He is using them for nonprofit educational purposes, is limiting the amount of material used (as long as he approximates the limits of the proposed guidelines), and is not doing anything that deprives the copyright holder of income. In fact, using a piece of a film may generate income for the copyright holder as kids that view it may be inspired to rent the video in order to see the rest of the film.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Chapter 9, C. 3.

The youth pastor may be upon shaky legal ground, however, if he edits film footage in a way that turns it into a new production. On the one hand the Supreme Court has looked favorably upon such use if the new product transforms the original work by adding new meaning, new information, new insights or new understanding.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the copyright holder has an argument that the youth pastor is presenting his material in a way that he did not intend and does not approve of. Offending the copyright holder is one of the two ways most likely to trigger a lawsuit.<sup>12</sup>

Practically speaking, the youth pastor is unlikely to be sued by a copyright holder for most of the visual presentations commonly created (except possibly for showing song lyrics without a license). First, these uses of copyrighted material are not costing the copyright holder any income, and may ultimately be generating some income for him. Second, the copyright holder has to incur a financial burden in order to litigate with no assurance that he will win (especially if the youth pastor has been careful to follow the Fair Use guidelines). Third, youth pastors and churches typically have little money, which makes them an undesirable target of litigation. Lastly, there is little chance that the copyright holder will ever discover what the typical youth pastor is doing with the copyrighted material.

The responsible and ethical youth pastor will, however, seek to always be in accordance with the law. To help to ensure that what he does is lawful there are some inexpensive steps that he can take. First he (or his church) should purchase a license to project the song lyrics that he is using from a licensing company such as Christian Copyright Licensing International. He should also purchase a license to show

---

<sup>11</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Chapter 9, B. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Copyright and Fair Use*, Chapter 9, D.



copyrighted films from a company such as Motion Picture Licensing Corporation, or Christian Video Licensing Inc. The first step is an absolute must as not doing so is clearly illegal. The second will protect him from Fair Use boundary issues in regard to using short movie clips, and will allow him to show entire films. The youth pastor should also educate himself regarding copyright law and Fair Use guidelines and seek to abide by them. Contact information for the companies named above, as well as informational website addresses regarding copyright issues can be found below.

## **Copyright and Licensing Information**

### **Licensing Companies**

Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI)  
17201 N.E. Sacramento  
Portland, OR 97230  
800-234-2446  
[www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)

Motion Picture Licensing Corporation  
P.O. Box 66970  
Los Angeles, CA 90066  
800-462-8855  
[www.mplc.com](http://www.mplc.com)

Christian Video Licensing, Inc.  
5455 Centinela Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90066  
888-771-2854  
[www.cvli.org](http://www.cvli.org)

### **Informational Websites**

Copyright and Fair Use, Stanford University  
<http://fairuse.stanford.edu>

US Copyright Office  
[www.loc.gov/copyright](http://www.loc.gov/copyright)

[www.legal-database.com](http://www.legal-database.com)

## APPENDIX 5

### Testing Instrument

#### [PRE-TEST]

#### Seminar Evaluation Form Part 1

Please do not write your name anywhere on this form.

##### Background Information

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What grade in school will you enter this coming fall? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What state do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the highest level of education that your Father completed? (Check only one.)
  - \_\_\_ High school
  - \_\_\_ Completed some college
  - \_\_\_ College graduate
  - \_\_\_ Received an advanced degree such as a Masters or a Doctorate
  - \_\_\_ Don't know
5. What is the highest level of education that your Mother completed? (Check only one.)
  - \_\_\_ High school
  - \_\_\_ Completed some college
  - \_\_\_ College graduate
  - \_\_\_ Received an advanced degree such as a Masters or a Doctorate
  - \_\_\_ Don't know
6. Using the 10-point scale below, circle how close you feel to God at this particular moment?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I feel very far from God					I feel very close to God				
7. Using the scale below, circle how you feel about God at this particular moment.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God is very unforgiving					God is very forgiving				
8. Using the scale below, circle how you feel about God at this particular moment.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God does not care that much about me					God cares a lot about me				

9. Using the scale below, circle how much at this particular moment you feel God cares about the things you do.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God does not care that much									God cares a lot about what I do

10. Using the scale below, circle how much you feel that God wants to help you in hard times at this particular moment.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God does not want to help me much									God wants to help me a lot

### [POST-TEST]

#### **Seminar Evaluation Form Part 2**

Please do not write your name anywhere on this form. Please also answer all questions as honestly and accurately as you can.

**Use the following scale to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

SD = Strongly Disagree    D = Disagree    N = Neutral    A = Agree    SA = Strongly Agree

- |  |    |   |   |   |    |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. This seminar was very enjoyable.                                    | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 2. I concentrated very hard during this seminar.                       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 3. This seminar really got me thinking about God's justice.            | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 4. This seminar really got me thinking about God's help in hard times. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 5. This seminar really got me thinking about the need for forgiveness. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 6. This seminar really got me thinking about God's love for me.        | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 7. This seminar got my mind thinking a lot.                            | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 8. This seminar really affected my emotions.                           | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 9. This seminar really held my attention.                              | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 10. How did this lesson affect your emotions?                          |    |   |   |   |    |

11. Using the 10-point scale below, circle how close you feel to God at this particular moment?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I feel very far from God									I feel very close to God

12. Using the scale below, circle how you feel about God at this particular moment.

[illegible]

13. Using the scale below, circle how you feel about God at this particular moment.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God does not care that much about me									God cares a lot about me

14. Using the scale below, circle how much at this particular moment you feel God cares about the things you do.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God does not care that much									God cares a lot about what I do

15. Using the scale below, circle how much you feel that God wants to help you in hard times at this particular moment.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
God does not want to help me much									God wants to help me a lot

16. Circle how determined you are to do what is right in your life because God will hold you accountable for everything you do.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Not very determined Extremely determined

17. Circle how determined you are to invite Jesus into every aspect of your life, whether good or bad?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Not very determined Extremely determined

18. Circle how determined you are to live for Jesus knowing that he gave his life for you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Not very determined Extremely  
determined

19. In the parable of the Minas in Luke 19, what else did the man who made ten minas receive from his master? Circle one.

- A. Ten more minas.
- B. Ten cities.
- C. Ten lashes.
- D. Ten plagues.

20. Jesus said that He would send you the "Counselor to be with you forever." Who is this "Counselor"? Circle one.

- A. Jesus.
- B. Your pastor.
- C. The Holy Spirit.
- D. The Bible.

21. Why can't God just forget about our sin? Circle one.

- A. Like an elephant, God can't forget.
- B. He is mad and doesn't want to.
- C. The devil keeps reminding him.
- E. If he did, he would not be a just judge.

**Additional Questions For Test Group A: Multimedia Presentation**

22. Circle how much you liked having the projected video accompany this talk.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10  
Did not like      Liked very much  
that much

23. What did you like about it?

**Additional Questions For Test Group B: Still Slide Presentation**

22. Circle how much you liked having the projected pictures accompany this talk.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10  
Did not like      Liked very much  
that much

23. What did you like about it?

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If finished, please wait quietly for everyone to finish at which time we will collect the forms and handout a thank you gift to each of you.

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Introductory Comments**

Thank you for being willing to come and take part in this seminar and in this research. My assistants are coming around to hand to each of you a pen and a seminar evaluation form. Please do not open the form until everyone has received one and I instruct you to do so.

This seminar explores the question, “Who is God?” Right now my primary purpose in teaching it is for you to learn from this seminar the same way you would from the other seminars. The purpose of the seminar evaluation form is to aid in my doctoral research, which involves comparing the effectiveness of various teaching methods. After the seminar is over and all the seminar evaluation forms are collected I will explain the precise purpose of this research and answer any questions that you might have.

Please do not write your name anywhere on this form. All your answers will be kept confidential. Please try to answer all questions as honestly and as accurately as you can. Your participation is completely voluntary. If there is a question or questions you do not wish to answer, please just skip it/them.

Please open your seminar evaluation form and complete Part 1. Do not continue on to Part 2.

If you are finished with Part 1, please tear Part 1 from your packet and hand it to my assistants.

Thank you for your help and cooperation. Now, let's begin the seminar.

## APPENDIX 7

### Survey of Video/Multimedia Usage in Youth Ministry Compiled Data From All Respondents

#### General

1. What is the approximate weekly attendance of your church?  
9% A. Less than 100.  
16% B. 100 to 200.  
33% C. 200 to 500.  
21% D. 500 to 1,000.  
21% E. More than 1,000.
2. What is the approximate number of students involved in your youth ministry?  
13% A. Less than 20.  
24% B. 20 to 50.  
30% C. 50 to 100.  
18% D. 100 to 200.  
12% E. 200 to 500.  
3% F. More than 500.
3. What ages does your youth ministry serve?  
7% A. 5<sup>th</sup> grade.  
54% B. 6<sup>th</sup> grade.  
100% C. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.  
100% D. 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.  
22% E. College.
4. What is your youth ministry's approximate yearly budget? (Do not include any salaries)  
  
\$ **17,700** per year.

#### Lyrics, Texts, Still Pictures

1. In your youth ministry do you: (mark all that apply)  
87% A. Project lyrics for worship/singing?  
70% B. Project Bible texts?  
72% C. Project PowerPoint (or similar program), slides as visual aids during teaching?  
74% D. Project still photos?



2. If you employ PowerPoint (or similar program), approximately how much time is spent per week in preparing the PowerPoint presentation?

With zeroes included

With zeroes excluded

**1.97** hours per week. S.D.=**1.86**

**2.42** hours per week. S.D.=**1.78**

3. How much do you think that PowerPoint (or similar program) improves the impact and effectiveness of your teaching or presentation?

49% A. A great deal.  
25% B. Somewhat.  
5% C. Marginally.  
1% D. Not at all.  
20% E. Not applicable to me.

4. Which software program do you primarily use to compose your presentation?

67% A. PowerPoint, version: \_\_\_\_\_  
28% B. Media Shout, version: \_\_\_\_\_  
0% C. Astound, version: \_\_\_\_\_  
0% D. Persuasion, version: \_\_\_\_\_  
7% E. Song Show, version: \_\_\_\_\_  
3% F. Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
20% G. Not applicable to me.

### **Video/Multimedia**

1. Does your youth ministry employ video/multimedia in the context of ministry? (not just to play a film during junior high *movie night*)

89% A. Yes  
11% B. No (if no, skip to question #12)

2. If so, in what settings do you use it? (mark all that apply)

31% A. Small groups.  
44% B. Bible studies.  
75% C. Worship.  
53% D. Sunday School.  
93% E. Large Group meetings.  
69% F. Retreats.  
69% G. Camps or conferences.  
6% H. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

3. How frequently is video/multimedia used in your youth ministry in the following settings?
- A. Small groups: approx. 2.7 times per month.
  - B. Bible studies: approx. 2.6 times per month.
  - C. Worship: approx. 3.6 times per month.
  - D. Sunday School: approx. 2.4 times per month.
  - E. Large Group meetings: approx. 3.2 times per month.
  - F. Retreats: approx. 2.6 times per year.
  - G. Camps or conferences: approx. 2.2 times per year.
4. How is the video/multimedia presented? (mark all that apply)
- 56% A. TV. screen.
  - 93% B. Video projector.
  - 0% C. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What device plays the video? (mark all that apply)
- 93% A. VCR.
  - 91% B. DVD player.
  - 81% C. Computer.
  - 47% D. Video camera.
  - 1.5% E. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In what ways is video/multimedia used in your ministry? mark all that apply
- 26% A. Live image: direct feed from camera to screen.
  - 76% B. Purchased VCR or DVD with a teaching message.
  - 94% C. Movie clips: scenes of commercial films used to illustrate a topic of point.
  - 88% D. Homemade video: video footage your ministry made.
  - 43% E. Combination: commercial film clips that you edited or modified (example: changed the words/sound track).
  - 60% F. Music videos.
  - 9% G. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.
7. For what purposes do you employ video technology? (mark all that apply)
- 72% A. Announcements.
  - 78% B. Introduce a topic.
  - 94% C. Illustrate or make a teaching point.
  - 60% D. Teach the lesson.
  - 31% E. Make the action on stage more visible to the audience.
  - 66% F. Make an emotional or memorable impact on the audience.
  - 68% G. Put your kids on the screen so that they can see themselves.
  - 79% H. Celebrate past events (retreats, etc.).
  - 82% I. Advertise upcoming events.
  - 51% J. Provide ministry opportunities for your kids and volunteers.
  - 6% K. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

8. How much time is invested in preparing video presentations for your youth ministry?

With zeroes: **6.97** hours per month. Standard deviation= **9.3**

Without zeroes: **7.62** hours per month. Standard deviation= **9.47**

9. For what philosophical or practical reasons do you employ video/multimedia in your youth ministry? (mark all that apply)

- 90% A. Video images can create a powerful emotional impact and be persuasive.
- 40% B. Kids are immersed in a video saturated culture and expect it.
- 49% C. Kids receive video messages more readily than they do traditional talks.
- 57% D. Video is entertaining.
- 60% E. Video taping your kids makes connections with them.
- 43% F. Video production gives kids the power to communicate.
- 1.5% G. Using video technology helps to impress your church.
- 9% H. Your group and/or venue necessitate it.
- 40% I. Playing a purchased teaching video can provide a better lesson for the occasion.
- 15% J. You sometimes are short on lesson preparation time.
- 49% K. Video production provides a useful ministry opportunity for kids and volunteers.
- 12% L. Other:

10. Who actually prepares the video/multimedia program for presentation? (mark all that apply)

- 80% A. The youth minister.
- 26% B. Someone on the paid youth ministry staff.
- 56% C. Volunteers.
- 57% D. Kids.
- 6% E. Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

11. How much do you think that the use of video/multimedia elements improves the impact and effectiveness of your program?

- 47% A. A great deal.
- 44% B. Somewhat.
- 7% C. Marginally.
- 1% D. Not at all.

## APPENDIX 8

### Survey of Video/Multimedia Usage in Youth Ministry Survey Results Broken Down By Size of Budget

Question	Choice	\$0-4.8K	\$5-9K	\$10-13.5K	\$14-24K	\$25K +
<b>Section 1</b>						
	# of	15	16	14	15	16
<b>1</b>						
What is the approximate weekly attendance of your church?						
Less than 100	A	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%
100 to 200.	B	27%	25%	14%	7%	6%
200 to 500.	C	20%	56%	43%	40%	6%
500 to 1,000.	D	7%	19%	36%	27%	19%
More than 1,000	E	0%	0%	7%	27%	69%
<b>2</b>						
What is the approximate number of students involved in your youth ministry?						
Less than 20.	A	60%	6%	0%	0%	0%
20 to 50	B	13%	38%	43%	20%	6%
50 to 100	C	20%	56%	29%	33%	13%
100 to 200	D	7%	0%	29%	27%	31%
200 to 500.	E	0%	0%	0%	13%	44%
More than 500	F	0%	0%	0%	7%	6%
<b>3</b>						
What ages does your youth ministry serve?						
5 <sup>th</sup> grade.	A	13%	0%	7%	7%	6%
6 <sup>th</sup> grade.	B	47%	44%	50%	60%	63%
7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade.	C	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.	D	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
college.	E	7%	13%	36%	27%	38%
<b>4</b>						
What is your youth ministry's approximate yearly budget?						
	\$/yr.	1.6K	6.9K	11.4K	17.9K	47.4K
	S.D.=*	1.7K	1.4K	1.4K	3.4K	23.2K
<b>Section 2</b>						
<b>1</b>						
In your youth ministry do you:						
Project lyrics for worship/singing?	A	40%	94%	100%	100%	100%
Project Bible texts?	B	40%	56%	86%	80%	94%
Project PowerPoint?	C	20%	69%	86%	87%	94%
Project still photos?	D	33%	69%	93%	93%	88%

<b>2</b>						
If you employ PowerPoint , how much time is spent per week in preparing the PowerPoint presentation?						
With 0's	hrs/wk	0.83	1.9	2.4	1.7	2.7
	S.D.=*	1.67	1.9	1.6	1.0	2.5
w/out 0's	hrs/wk	2.5	2.6	N/A	N/A	2.9
	S.D.=*	2.1	1.7	N/A	N/A	2.5
<b>3</b>						
How much do you think that PowerPoint improves the impact and effectiveness of your teaching or presentation?						
A great deal.	A	20%	38%	64%	60%	63%
Somewhat.	B	7%	25%	29%	33%	31%
Marginally	C	0%	19%	7%	7%	0%
Not at all.	D	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable to me.	E	67%	19%	7%	0%	6%
<b>4</b>						
Which software program do you primarily use to compose your presentation?						
PowerPoint	A	27%	69%	100%	67%	81%
Media Shout	B	7%	13%	21%	47%	50%
Astound	C	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Persuasion	D	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Song Show	E	7%	0%	14%	13%	0%
Other	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
Not applicable to me.	G	67%	25%	0%	0%	6%
<b>Section 3</b>						
<b>1</b>						
Does your youth ministry employ video/multimedia in the context of ministry?						
	Yes	60%	94%	93%	100%	100%
	No	40%	6%	7%	0%	0%
<b>2</b>						
If so, in what settings do you use it?						
Small groups	A	33%	20%	23%	33%	44%
Bible studies.	B	56%	60%	54%	27%	31%
Worship	C	67%	73%	77%	87%	69%
Sunday School.	D	33%	60%	62%	47%	56%
Large Group meetings	E	78%	93%	100%	87%	100%
Retreats	F	44%	67%	62%	73%	88%
Camps or conferences.	G	44%	53%	69%	73%	94%
Other	H	22%	0%	8%	7%	13%

<b>3</b>	X/month					
How frequently is video/multimedia used in your youth ministry in the following settings?						
Small groups	A	3.5	2.2	1.7	3.6	2.1
Bible studies	B	2.8	2.2	2.4	2.0	4.0
Worship	C	2.6	3.5	3.2	3.8	4.7
Sunday School	D	3.0	1.8	1.0	2.8	3.5
Large Group meetings	E	3.0	3.0	4.0	2.9	3.2
Retreats	F	2.0	1.9	2.4	3.0	3.0
Camps or conferences	G	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.3
<b>4</b>						
How is the video/multimedia presented?						
TV. screen	A	78%	60%	69%	47%	38%
Video projector.	B	78%	87%	100%	100%	94%
Other	C	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>5</b>						
What device plays the video?						
VCR	A	100%	93%	92%	87%	81%
DVD player	B	78%	87%	100%	93%	100%
Computer	C	78%	73%	92%	87%	81%
Video camera	D	56%	53%	38%	47%	38%
Other	E	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>6</b>						
In what ways is video/multimedia used in your ministry?						
Live image: direct feed	A	22%	20%	31%	20%	38%
Purchased VCR or DVD	B	89%	93%	69%	87%	56%
Movie clips	C	89%	100%	100%	93%	94%
Homemade video	D	78%	87%	100%	93%	81%
Combination	E	22%	33%	46%	47%	63%
Music videos	F	33%	67%	77%	87%	50%
Other	G	11%	13%	15%	0%	0%
<b>7</b>						
For what purposes do you employ video technology?						
Announcements	A	67%	73%	77%	73%	69%
Introduce a topic	B	44%	80%	92%	87%	75%
Illustrate or make a teaching point	C	67%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Teach the lesson	D	56%	87%	38%	60%	56%
Make the action on stage visible to the audience	E	22%	13%	38%	40%	31%
Make an emotional or memorable impact on the audience.	F	56%	53%	77%	73%	69%
Put your kids on the screen	G	44%	53%	85%	67%	94%
Celebrate past events	H	44%	87%	85%	80%	94%
Advertise upcoming events	I	44%	67%	85%	93%	100%

Provide ministry opportunities	J	22%	46%	62%	53%	63%
Other	K	11%	0%	15%	7%	0%
<b>8</b>						
How much time is invested in preparing video presentations for your youth ministry?						
	hrs/mth	5.9	5.6	5.6	6.0	12.8
	S.D.=*	9.6	6.5	3.4	3.3	15.3
<b>9</b>						
For what philosophical or practical reasons do you employ video/multimedia in your youth ministry?						
Video images can create a powerful emotional impact and be persuasive.	A	89%	87%	92%	93%	88%
Kids are immersed in a video saturated culture and expect it.	B	44%	27%	23%	40%	63%
Kids receive video messages more readily than they do traditional talks	C	56%	46%	54%	53%	38%
Video is entertaining	D	56%	60%	38%	67%	63%
Video taping your kids makes connections with them.	E	33%	46%	69%	47%	88%
Video production gives kids the power to communicate.	F	33%	33%	23%	40%	75%
Using video technology helps to impress your church.	G	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%
Your group and/or venue necessitate it.	H	0%	7%	8%	0%	25%
A purchased teaching video can provide a better lesson	I	44%	46%	31%	40%	38%
You sometimes are short on lesson preparation time	J	33%	13%	23%	13%	6%
Video production provides a useful ministry opportunity for kids and volunteers.	K	33%	33%	54%	40%	69%
Other	L	44%	13%	15%	7%	6%
<b>10</b>						
Who prepares the video/multimedia program for presentation?						
The youth minister.	A	89%	87%	77%	87%	69%
Paid youth ministry staff.	B	0%	20%	15%	20%	63%
Volunteers	C	56%	40%	46%	67%	69%
Kids	D	56%	40%	46%	53%	94%
Other	E	11%	0%	15%	7%	6%
<b>11</b>						
How much do you think that the use of video/multimedia elements improves the impact and effectiveness of your program?						
A great deal.	A	44%	27%	38%	53%	69%
Somewhat	B	44%	47%	62%	40%	31%
Marginally	C	0%	27%	0%	7%	0%
Not at all	D	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%

\*S.D.= Standard Deviation

## Bibliography

- Allan, David W. "A Phenomenological Perspective on Motion Media: The Iconic Phenomena Communication Model." *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 19 (1992): 149-155.
- Anderson, Daniel R. and Patricia A. Collins. "The Impact on Children's Education: Television's Impact on Cognitive Development. Working Paper #2." Washington, D.C.: Office of Education Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, April 1, 1988. ERIC, ED 295271.
- Bazeli, Frank P., and Peter T. Bazeli. "Instructional Implications of Visual and Verbal Short-Term Memory Capacity Differences Among Children." In *Visual Communication: Bridging Across Cultures. Selected Readings From the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association Held in Washington, D.C. October 1991*, edited by Judy Clark Baca et al., 39-45. Blacksburg, VA., 1992.
- Bordeaux, Barbara and Garrett Lange. "Children's Reported Investment of Mental Effort When Viewing Television." *Communication Research*, 18 (1991): 617-635.
- Brown, William E. "Theology in a Postmodern Culture: Implications of a Video-Dependent Society." In *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by David S. Dockery, 58-167. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
- Buck, Ross. "Emotion and Cognition: A Developmental-Interactionist Perspective." Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. Toronto: April 25-28, 1985. ERIC, ED 260849.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Emotional Education and Mass Media: A New View of the Global Village." In *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*, edited by Robert P. Hawkins, John M. Wiemann, and Susan Pingree, 44-77. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988.
- Buck, Ross, Arjun Chaudhuri, Mats Georgson, and Srinivas Kowta. "Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Affect, Reason, and Involvement in Persuasion: The ARI Model and the CASC Scale." *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22 (1995), 440-447.
- Chaudhuri, Arjun, and Ross Buck. "Media Differences in Rational and Emotional Responses to Advertising." *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 39 (1995), 109-126.
- Chiarelott, Leigh. "Cognition and the Media-ted Curriculum: Effects of Growing



- Up in an Electronic Environment." *Educational Technology*, May 1984, 19-22.
- Cohen, Jodi R. "The Television Generation, Television Literacy, and Television Trends." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Communication Association. Syracuse, N.Y.: May 18-21, 1987. ERIC, ED 281260.
- Curtis, Bruce. "Retro-Worship: Challenging the Techno Paradigm." *Youthworker*, March/April 2001, 36.
- Damasio, Antonio R. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: Gosset/Putnam, 1994.
- Danielou, Jean. *Primitive Christian Symbols*. Translated by Donald Attwater. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964.
- Dawn, Marva J. *Is It a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church's Children*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for this Urgent Time*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Delp, Jay and Joel Lusz. *Just Shoot Me!* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Detweiler, Craig and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meaning: Finding God in Pop Culture*. Engaging Culture, eds. William A. Dyrness and Robert K. Johnston. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003.
- Dyrness, William A. *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Eason, Tim. *Media Ministry Made Easy: A Practical Guide to Visual Communication*. Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 2003.
- Ellul, Jacques. *The Humiliation of the Word*. Translated by Joyce Main Hanks. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.
- Finey, Paul Corby, ed. *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Fite, Katherine V. "Television and the Brain: A Review." Paper commissioned by Children's Television Workshop. New York, N.Y.: June 15, 1993. ERIC, ED 372870.

Frame, John M. *Worship in Spirit and Truth*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1996.

Gaebelein, Frank, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, *Exodus*, by Walter C. Kaiser. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, *Matthew*, by D.A. Carson. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, *The Acts of the Apostles*, by Richard N. Longenecker. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981.

Gathercoal, Paul. "Brain research and Mediated Experience: An Interpretation of the Implications for Education." *The Clearinghouse*, 63 (1990), 271-273.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Endorphins and Media Messages: Addicting Students to Mediated Violence and Emotion." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal: April 19-23, 1999. ERIC, ED 437926.

Goethals, Gregor T. *The Electronic Golden Calf: Images, Religion, and the Making of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1990.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. San Francisco: Harper Row, 1984.

Grant, Peter J. "The Tension Between Biblical Purity and Cultural Relevance in Seeker Churches." D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1999.

Guinness, Os. *Dining with the Devil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993.

Gunter, Barrie, and Jill L. McAleer. *Children and Television: The One-Eyed Monster?* New York: Routledge, 1990.

Harms, John B. and David R. Dickens. "Postmodern Media Studies: Analysis or Symptom?" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 13 (1996): 210.

Hawkins, Robert P. and others. "What Holds Attention to Television? Strategic Inertia of Looks at Content Boundaries." *Communication Research*, 29 (2002), 3-30.

- Hooper, Kristina. "Multimedia in Education: Summary Chapter." *Learning Tomorrow: Journal of the Apple Education Advisory Council*, 3 (1987), 357-374.
- Huston, Aletha C., and others. *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- Jewell, John P. *Wired For Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Brazos, 2004.
- Kellermann, Kathy. "Memory Processes in Media Effects." *Communication Research*, 12 (January 1985), 83-131.
- Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2003.
- Kozma, Robert B. "The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues" in "Current Research." column ed. Delia Neuman. *School Library Media Quarterly*, 22 (1994), 233-240.
- Kruse, Gary D. "Cognitive Science and Its Implications for Education." *NASSP Bulletin*, 82 (1998), 73-79.
- Lang, Annie and Marian Friestad. "Emotion, Hemispheric Specialization, and Visual and Verbal Memory for Television Messages." *Communication Research*, 20 (1993), 647-670.
- McKim, Robert H. *Experiences in Visual Thinking*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1972.
- McLaughlin, Raymond W. *The Ethics of Persuasive Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979.
- Meadowcroft, Jeanne M. and Beth Olson. *Television Viewing vs. Reading: Testing Information Processing Assumptions*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Washington, D.C.: August 9-12, 1995. ERIC, ED 392106.
- Mercer, Michael Matthew. "We have a Story." *Yothworker E-Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 8.
- Messaris, Paul. "Analog, Not Digital: Roots of Visual Literacy and Visual Intelligence." In *Visual Literacy in the Digital Age. Selected Readings From the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association*, 307-318. Rochester, NY: October 13-17, 1993.
- Michalski, Sergiusz. *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image*

- Question in Western and Eastern Europe*. Christianity and Society in the Modern World, eds. Hugh McLeod and Bob Scribner, New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Miles, Margaret R. *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.
- Morgenthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
- Moriarty, Sandra E. "Mapping the Visual Communication Field." In *Eyes on the Future: Converging Images, Ideas, and Instruction. Selected Readings From the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association*, 379-386. Chicago: October 18-22, 1995.
- Nelson, Jenny. "Eyes Out of Your Head: On Television Experience." Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 6 (1989), 387-403.
- Neuman, Susan B. *Literacy in the Television Age: The Myth of the TV Effect*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995.
- Nichols, Aidan. *The Art of God Incarnate: Theology and Image in Christian Tradition*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1980.
- Olcott, Neil D. "The Use of Multimedia to Help Preach Christ." D.Min. diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1997.
- Packer, J.I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961.
- Pagano, Robert R. *Understanding Statistics in the Behavioral Sciences*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001.
- Post, W. Ellwood. *Saints, Signs, and Symbols*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wilton, Connecticut: Morehouse-Barlow, 1974.
- Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Prawd, Leslie. "The Negative Effects of Television on Children." *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 22 (1995), 255-263.
- Purcell, Kevin, "The Role That Multimedia Can Play in Expository Preaching." D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2005.
- Rabey, Steve. "Culture: Enemy of Friend?" *Youthworker*, January/February 2001, 7.
- Reynolds, Gregory Edward. *The WORD is Worth a Thousand Pictures:*

- Preaching in the Electronic Age*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000.
- Richardson, Don. *Eternity in their Hearts*, Revised ed. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984.
- Rood, Carrie. "Critical Viewing and the Significance of the Emotional Response." In *Eyes on the Future: Converging Images, Ideas, and Instruction. Selected Readings From the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association*, 111-117. Chicago: October 18-22, 1995.
- Salomon, Gavriel. *Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning*. Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1979.
- Sample, Tex. *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World: Electronic Culture and the Gathered people of God*. Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 1998.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Art and the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. Old Tappan, NJ.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976.
- Schmitt, Kelly L., Daniel R. Anderson, and Patricia A. Collins. "Form and Content: Looking at Visual Features of Television." *Developmental Psychology*, 35 (1999), 1156-1167.
- Schultze, Quentin J. *High-Tech Worship? Using Presentational Technology Wisely*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.
- Shapiro, Michael A. and Annie Lang. "Making Television Reality: Unconscious Processes in the Construction of Social Reality." *Communication Research*, 18 (1991), 685-705.
- Shrum, L.J. "Development of a Cognitive Process Model to Explain the Effects of Heavy Television Viewing on Social Judgment." *Advances in Consumer Research*, 25 (1998), 289-294.
- Shrum, L.J., Robert S. Wyer Jr. and Thomas C. O'Guin. "The Effects of Television Consumption on Social Perceptions: The Use of Priming Procedures to Investigate Psychological Processes." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (1998), 447-458.
- Singer, Dorothy G., and Jerome L. Singer, eds. *Handbook of Children and the Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

- Sinofsky, Esther R. *A Copyright Primer for Educational and Industrial Media Producers*. Friday Harbor, WA: Copyright Informational Services, 1988.
- Stafford, Barbara Maria. *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Learning*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.
- Steffler, Alva William. *Symbols of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Strate, Lance. "Post(modern)man, or Neil Postman as a Postmodernist." *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 51 (1994), 159-171.
- Stewart, Brian. "Do We Really Have to Compete with TV?" D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1999.
- Stott, John R. W. *I Believe in Preaching*, I Believe, ed. Michael Green. Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World*. Nashville, TN.: Broadman and Holman, 2000.
- Syndicus, Eduard. *Early Christian Art*. Faith and Facts Books: Catholic Truth in the Scientific Age, ed. Lancelot C. Sheppard, no. 116. London: Burns and Oates, 1962.
- Tufte, Edward R. *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press LLC, 2003.
- Villani, Susan. "Impact of Media on Children and Adolescents: A 10-Year Review of the Research." *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40 (2001), 392-401.
- Veith, Gene Edward. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994.
- Walsh, Robert. "Brain-Friendly Communication." *Training and Development* 54 (2000): 17-19.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

- Welle, David K. "The Use and Teaching of Emotional Appeal for Persuasion in Preaching." D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2004.
- Wells, David F. *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *No Place for Truth, or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Williams, Rowan. *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with Icons*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003
- Wilson, Len. *The Wired Church: Making Media Ministry*. Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 1999.
- Wilson, Len and Jason Moore. *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*. Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 2002.
- Winn, Marie. *The Plug-In Drug*. New York: Viking, 1977.
- Wright, Dave and Dixon Kinser. "Post-Relational Youth Ministry: Beyond Youth Work as We Know It." *Youthworker*, September/October 2004, 46.
- Zelensky, Elizabeth and Lela Gilbert. *Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005.

## **VITA**

William Anton Ackerman was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, on August 27, 1961. He graduated from the Pennsylvania State University in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering, from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1991 with a Masters of Divinity degree at which time he also received the 1991 Division Award for Preaching, and from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2007 with a Doctor of Ministry degree. He was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1992 and has been working primarily in youth ministry since 1985 in several churches and in various capacities. This thesis, "The Use of Still and Multimedia Images in Teaching or Preaching to Enhance the Youth Pastor's Ability to Persuade and Communicate with Youth", was completed in 2006.